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THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Cloudy and windy

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The Tabloid
Fashion:
prepare to take
the plunge

The Tabloid

**Enough of the
joys of sex**



Comment

**Britain is feeling
good again**
page 14

Major claims credit for cool Britain

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

John Major last night painted himself as the architect of Cool Britain, the rules of the pop music airwaves, has taken over the fashion catwalks of Paris and upstaged Broadway.

Just three years ago Mr Major was evoking a Britain of warm beer, cycling old maids, county cricket grounds and morning mist.

But last night, in his speech to the Lord Mayor's banquet, he dramatically changed his sales pitch to a Britain of packed pubs and clubs, streets bustling with foreign tourists and a capital city described in *Newsweek* as "the coolest city on the planet".

He urged the voters to ignore the "professional pessimists" and realise how much of a trend-setter Britain had become under his leadership.

Mr Major said that having come through "an industrial and economic revolution", with inflation subdued and the boom-bust cycle broken, Britain now faced the prospect of becoming one of the world's most successful global trading nations in the 21st century.

The only thing that Britain lacked was self-confidence. "The last crucial ingredient for our future success."

He said there were always people ready to write Britain off. "They are always wrong. Listening to the political debate you might sometimes get the impression that confidence is something we don't have as a nation, or even that it's something we can't have."

But if people lifted their eyes above the charmed circle of London-based doom-mongers they would get an entirely different picture.

"The City of London has the greatest concentration of foreign banks in the world," Mr Major said.

"Britain has won more Nobel prizes than any nation except the US... Britain has won a third of all Oscars in the last 30 years. Our streets are bustling with foreign tourists."

"Our pubs, clubs and restaurants are in demand worldwide. Our education system attracts half a million foreign students a year. Our theatres give the lead to Broadway."

"Our pop culture rules the airwaves. Our country has taken over the fashion catwalks of Paris."

Mr Major said it was time to "parade our virtues" as a country. "To show - at home and abroad - how far Britain has come in economic progress and in the quality of our life and culture."



Tories intend to revoke Europe's 48-hour week

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

If the European Court rules today that British employees should work no more than 48 hours a week and have statutory paid holidays, John Major will move to revoke these rights after the general election.

"That means they will go into the next election asking people to vote for a holiday-free Britain," a senior Labour source told *The Independent* last night.

Under the terms of the Working Time Directive, all workers would have automatic entitlement to three weeks' annual paid holiday. Labour estimates that nearly 2.5 million British employees - 12 per cent of the workforce - get no paid holiday leave.

"Britain is the only country

in the European Union where employees have no legal right to paid holiday," a Labour spokesman said.

The Government has decided to implement the directive almost immediately and then, if re-elected next year, will try to change the governing European Treaty.

In a speech to the Lord Mayor's banquet, at the Guildhall, the Prime Minister last night repeated that the Government would threaten to veto any further European Treaty unless it included guaranteed cover for a British opt-out from employment legislation like the directive.

A government source said later that Mr Major did not want the Working Time Directive to apply to Britain: any treaty change would have to be re-

spective and allow British exemption from the provisions of the directive.

This means that if the European Court upholds the directive today, as expected, ministers will implement it as soon as possible. Mr Major will then seek its revocation in a new treaty that is due to be concluded in Amsterdam next June - if he is re-elected in an expected May election.

In his Guildhall speech, the Prime Minister said the Government would continue to resist proposals that would damage British competitiveness, costing the country markets and losing jobs.

"That is why the Working Time Directive, on which a European Court judgment is expected tomorrow, represents an important point of principle.

"We are in favour of good working conditions in this country. They are very important."

"But the basic employee protections are long-established in common law. There's no case for extra prescriptive legislation from Europe - imposed by qualified majority voting against British objections - on matters that are now best resolved between employer and employee."

"That is why, if the court rules against us, we will require changes in European law to reinforce Britain's protection from such legislation. Our partners know that. And they know that we shall insist upon these changes before they can conclude any new agreements at the Inter-Governmental Conference next year."

Whitehall bids to run all schools

Fran Abrams
Education Correspondent

Ministers are considering plans which would effectively nationalise education by taking school spending away from local authorities.

The plans, put to ministers by a powerful government funding quango, would mean one of the biggest steps towards centralisation since the war.

The call from the Funding Agency for Schools, the body set up to finance and plan spending, has been backed by head teachers' and grant-maintained schools' organisations.

It has caused outrage among local authorities, which say it could mean the end of local democracy, and has also been criticised by the influential National Commission on Education.

Ministers are unlikely to act before the general election to remove local authorities' powers, but many Conservatives would like to see a manifesto pledge on the subject.

Some of them want the Government to pay the same amount for all pupils, regardless of where they live.

The funding agency has set out its proposals in response to government plans for a new national financing scheme for grant-maintained schools.

A spokesman for the agency, which has a big role in implementing educational reform such as increased selection and extra powers for grant-maintained schools, said some schools were much richer than others under the current system. "Local authorities don't decide on the content of the cur-

riculum or teachers' pay or standards. This is a logical extension of a pattern that has developed in recent years," he said.

However, local authorities are horrified by the idea that they could lose control of school funding and believe that such a move would be tantamount to abolition. They would be left to administer a few closely regulated areas such as school transport and special educational

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, compared the powers the Government would take on to absolute monarchy. "It's a Henry the Eighth move," he said.

Labour's spokesman on education was more cautious, though. David Blunkett said he was not in favour of a national funding formula but objected mainly on the grounds that schools could lose money and class sizes could rise. At present, councils spend almost £700m more on education than the Government says they should.

Labour has not decided exactly how far it will go in setting out national rules on school funding.

"It is very difficult for an agency based in York to make financial decisions which are sensitive to the needs of schools from Devon to Liverpool and from Norfolk to Carlisle," Mr Blunkett said.

Lord Walton of Deichant, chairman of the National Commission on Education, said it believed in local decision-making. "At first sight I would feel uncomfortable about the total removal of all schools from any local authority democratic control," he said.

A spokesman for the Department of Education and Employment said a number of organisations wanted local authorities' spending powers to be removed. Ministers were looking at their suggestions and at those on payment by results, he said. "We will look at it in the light of what people are saying and in the course of time ministers will decide what they want to do," he said.

Leading article, page 13



Henry VIII: Schooled in the arts of centralised control

needs, but would have very little real power. Graham Lane, the chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' education committee, described the move as "government by quango."

"This would destroy local government, and it would also destroy education for thousands of young people. I don't want a quango appointed by the Government running around interfering with locally elected bodies," he said. The proposal drew criticism from a number of quarters last night.

QUICKLY

Willetts denial
Minister David Willetts denied that he attempted to smother an investigation by a parliamentary committee into allegations that MPs accepted cash-for-questions. Page 2

Zaire deadline
The population of Kinshasa, the Zairean capital, is bracing itself for violent demonstrations today, the deadline set by students and their political masters for Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo's resignation. Page 10

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Hello boys...but it's goodbye girls

Marianne MacDonald
Media Correspondent

Is it more acceptable to show a woman in a brassiere on an advertising hoarding than a man in underpants?

An underwear company is grappling with the apparent sexism at the heart of this question after being warned off running a poster campaign showing a male model wearing underpants.

Their proposed slogans of "The Loins King" and "Full Metal Packer" are thought too cheeky, so to speak. But are they more so than the Wonderbra advert which shot Eva Herzigova's cleavage to fame under the legend "Hello Boys"?

Kevin Higgs, founder of Brass Monkeys, said that the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), an advisory arm of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), told him he should use



Sizing them up: Deep cleavage is OK, but a smaller model is ordered for the underpants

a "smaller" model if he wanted his poster campaign to run, despite its appearance without problems in men's magazines. He wants to know why the makers of the Wonderbra ad-

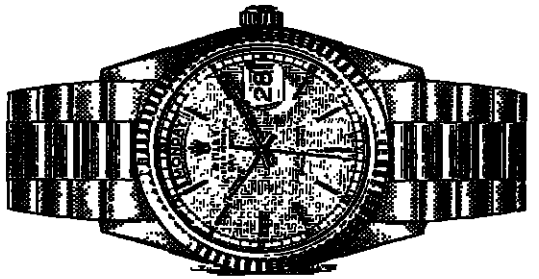
vertisement were not given the same advice. "It's double standards. If it was female underwear it wouldn't be a problem," he said yesterday. "They are probably all old men at the ASA who think

it's fine to have a sexy-looking female for men to look at, but you couldn't trust ladies on the high street with a picture of a good-looking man. It's ridiculous."

Mr Higgs said members of CAP told him that an advertisement for Club 18-30, which featured a man's crotch over the slogan "Girls. Can we interest you in a package holiday?" had also had to be withdrawn. "I said, we're doing men's underwear. What do they want us to do? We can hardly put the underpants on his head."

A spokesman for the committee explained breasts were considered more acceptable than groins. "People will appreciate there's a difference between focusing on the groin area and the chest area in advertising," he said. But Susie Orbach, the best-selling feminist writer, said the ASA's distinction was bizarre. "We take it so much for granted that we can display and sell women's bodies that we don't even pause for thought. It takes trying to sell men through their bodies to make us pay attention."

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*Watch shown available in 18ct. yellow gold priced £10,650, white gold £11,140 and platinum £12,950.

news

Short, sharp sound-bite snaps at Britannia

It is a useful convention that when the Government has a big piece of legislation planned, it issues something called a White Paper, setting out what it intends to do. By reverse logic you would have thought that when it hasn't, it doesn't.

So when the clever Scots lawyer, Malcolm Rifkind - Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs - rose in the House of Commons to make a statement about his new White Paper, entitled "Free Trade And Foreign Policy - A Global Vision", wild horses would not have dragged me away from a Chamber in which history was about to be made. For when the words "Global Vision" are on the front of a "White



DAVID AARONOVITCH

Paper", the link has surely been made between great thoughts and great deeds - deeds against which the Labours of Hercules would seem puny and insignificant. And they said this government had run out of steam!

Here is what Mr Rifkind said. I have filtered out the clichés and unnecessary pieces of political persiflage, leaving the distilled essence and most

determinative passages from his statement.

"Madam Speaker. The Government's objectives are wide-ranging [including] progress in implementing existing commitments, completing ongoing negotiations and initiating a further substantial liberalising work programme, and then a final push [Rifkindian for "push"] forward to achieve the target of global free trade by 2020. The Government is clear that free-market policies are best. Political developments over the last decade have created new opportunities. Throughout the world security and stability are an essential prerequisite for markets to function smoothly. Britain is an Atlantic as well as a European nation.

We are determined to open up new opportunities. The Government has the vision to set this bold policy objective. It is our 2020 vision of the world."

Having unleashed this torrent of fresh, exciting new ideas on the House, Mr Rifkind could be forgiven for getting all shirty when his opposite number, Robin Cook, suggested that the White Paper wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. "A farrago of nonsense", was how Mr Rifkind described Cook's intervention, and one which indicated the "difference between sound-bite and strategy". The difference being (as far as I can see), that one is short and meaningless, and the other is in-terminable and meaningless.

Earlier Deputy Prime Min-

ister's questions had brought together three of the most emblematic men in the Government. Captain Chrisma. Hezza himself, facing trouble over charges of wanting to suborn the civil service; Planet-brain David Willetts, Paymaster-General, was due up before some investigation, accused of committee tampering whilst a whip; and Roger Freeman, who - with his slicked-back hair, pin-stripe suit, utterly bland appearance and way with platitudes - is a police artist's impression of a politician.

Heseline's outraged innocence was masterful. Having initiated the idea of civil servants undertaking work on behalf of the Conservative Party, it was he, himself, who (with a little

assistance from Sir Robin Butler) had stopped it! Willetts blushed and fumbled through his answers, his mind (engagingly) elsewhere. Mr Freeman slipped and slid between his questioners, with an aplomb that would have done credit to a figure skater.

It was, however, Labour's Tony Banks (who increasingly resembles the ex-dancer and celebrity Lionel Blair both physically and in terms of his act) who summed up the mood. "There are 12 unexploded bombs in my constituency. [Hear, hear] roared his colleague Paul Flynn, for no reason that I could discern. And it's most unpleasant to think that you might be living over one of them." Amen, said Messrs Heseltine and Willetts.

significant shorts

Row deepens over genetic engineering

British consumer groups and supermarkets added their voices to a growing European row over the lack of identification of American genetically-modified soya beans, which will soon be incorporated into hundreds of foods, such as bread, margarine and chocolate.

The Consumers' Association called on the Government to take action to force food producers to label foodstuffs which could contain the altered soya beans. The first shipments - mixed irretrievably with normal soya beans - arrived by ship from the US in Germany and Holland last week.

Meanwhile, Sainsbury's and Asda said they were working with suppliers to provide alternative sources of unmodified soya beans and provide full information to customers. The frozen food chain, Iceland, said in a letter to Greenpeace that it felt that Monsanto, which developed the "Roundup Ready" bean to be resistant to one of its herbicides, had been "irresponsible" in letting the beans into the marketplace. *Charles Arthur*

Lange to star in West End 'Desire'

Hollywood star Jessica Lange will make her West End debut as Blanche DuBois in Tennessee Williams' classic play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. It was confirmed yesterday. In the role that Vivien Leigh made her own in the classic 1951 film, 46-year-old Lange will act opposite Toby Stephens, son of Maggie Smith and the late Sir Robert Stephens, as Stanley Kowalski.

Lange made her Broadway debut with the play in 1992, co-starring with Alec Baldwin, and it was later made into a film. Since then she has received a Best Actress Oscar for her part in the film *Blue Sky* last year. The new production is directed by Sir Peter Hall. Previews run from 18 December for an open-ended season at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket.

Killer wins legal aid fight

A double killer has been granted legal aid in his bid to become the first prisoner to have a sex change operation.

Doug Wakefield, 49, serving life at Frankland Jail, Durham, wants to sue the Prison Service for the right to have surgery on the NHS. Wakefield, who answers only to the name Dee, was convicted at Leeds Crown Court 22 years ago of murdering his uncle with a garden fork and then burying the body in a garden.

He later received a manslaughter conviction after killing a fellow prisoner at Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight. Regarded as one of the most violent men behind bars, he twice took prison officers hostage, trying to kill one of them.

Britons face drug charges

Two Britons have been charged with attempting to smuggle more than 200bs of cocaine out of Venezuela. James Miles, 18, and Paul Loseby, 20, will probably go on trial within eight months. The two have not been sent to the notorious La Planta Prison, where guards recently killed 30 prisoners who rioted over their conditions. Instead, they are being held in police cells in the capital, Caracas.

The Venezuelan ambassador to the UK said they were arrested a week after a tip from Interpol that two "mules" would try to smuggle cocaine strapped to their bodies.

Postal vote on £20m Said gift

Dons at Oxford University are to have a postal vote on plans for a £40m business school, partly funded by the Middle Eastern businessman, Wafic Said.

Around 3,200 academics will decide whether the new school, backed by a £20million donation from Said, should be built on a university sports ground in the centre of the city. Last week, the university's parliament voted by 259 to 214 not to release the site. *Fran Abrams*

Women risk bad hair days

Women who make it to the boardroom may have to face an unforeseen battle keeping their hair on. Hair loss is as serious a problem for women as it is for men because of the lifestyle and stresses brought about by equal opportunities, according to a report in the magazine, *Hair International*. Jonathan Capes, editor of *Hair International*, said: "A new generation of high-powered women are prime targets for the increased stress levels and poor diet which tend to go hand-in-hand with business responsibility."

In shops, stations, airports and schools, a busy world stopped turning



All quiet: The war memorial at Ickleton, Cambridgeshire, yesterday at 11am. Photograph: Brian Harris. Those observing the silence around the country included, clockwise, a soldier in Belfast, Newcastle station, at Cadbury's plant in Birmingham and Marks and Spencers store at Marble Arch, central London. Photographs: Newstream/Pace-maker

Records show grim toils of war

Jojo Moyes and Jessica Gawlick

Arthur Cockerill stands out from his 13 fellow soldiers in the sepia-toned photograph of the Royal Engineers. His plump cheeks make him look curiously young next to his comrades, and he is the only one with an unlit cigarette in his mouth.

"We've only just realised,"

said his son, also Arthur, yesterday. "Look at his baby face. It looks like a bit of a brat. He was only 17 at the time - two years younger than he states in careful, joined-up writing on his enlistment papers."

Arthur Cockerill's records, some of which have been damaged by fire during the Blitz, are among those just released by the

Public Records Office for Armistice Day yesterday.

His two sons, Arthur and John, were at the office yesterday, looking for clues to the wartime experiences of someone who, in his own lifetime, had preferred to say little.

What they found was that Arthur Cockerill, of Robin Hood's Bay in Yorkshire, enlisted at the beginning of the

First World War, giving his false date of birth as 1895. His medical records show he was hospitalised three times, but gave no reason. This was because he had been repeatedly gassed with Phosgene, something unknown to his sons.

Although he was gassed three times, you can see his medical condition was written as A.I., said Arthur junior yesterday. That was not how his sons remembered him.

"We'll always remember him as rather unwell. He was very ill, especially in later life. He had very little lung function. When he died it was the result of an operation for which he couldn't have an anaesthetic," said John.

Their father was transferred to the reserves in 1919 and given a 25 per cent pension. In 1923 that was reduced to 20 per cent. "He was a man of great spirit, but by the time he was 55 he could no longer work," Arthur junior said. He was given a full pension in 1953.

Cockerill's tale is just one of thousands which have come to light with the release of 33,000 boxes of documents yesterday detailing the records of men who served in the British Army between 1914 and 1920.

Also among them was the war poet Ivor Gurney. Although he is commemorated at Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner, records show he met his death in a far less celebrated manner, dying in a mental institution in 1937.

In April, 1917, Gurney had been wounded, but not enough, as he wrote to Marion Scott, to be sent home. "Well, I am wounded: but not badly; perhaps not badly enough; as though kind people told me it meant Blighty for me, yet here I am at Rouen marked 'tense'."

It was during an attack on Good Friday night that a bullet hit me and went clean through the right arm, just underneath the shoulder... it hurt badly for half an hour, but now hurts not at all," Gurney was gassed at Passchendaele seven months later and suffered a mental collapse in 1918. During the next four years he tried to settle into various jobs, including cinema pianist, clerk and farmworker, while often sleeping rough. He wrote much of his poetry during this time, before being committed in 1922.

Gurney's and Arthur Cockerill's records are on temporary display at the Records Office, along with those of the war artist Sir Stanley Spencer and the actor Ronald Coleman to commemorate the records' release.

Arthur Cockerill, junior, who donated the early photographs of his father, said yesterday that despite his father's unwillingness to talk about the war, he would have "had a chuckle" to see himself commemorated, and his records on public display. "Especially being on the wall next to Ronald Coleman," he added.

'Sadist in Nazi garb killed men for fun'

Jonathan Foster

A sadistic and predatory homosexual was a serial killer for fun, stabbing four men in murders which left him feeling "at peace", a court was told yesterday.

Peter Moore's wardrobe had strong Nazi influences. Alex Carille, QC, for the prosecution, said at Mold Crown Court in north Wales. He liked to wear black leather when lurking at the meeting places of homosexuals. "The man in black - black thoughts and the blackest of deeds," Mr Carille said.

Moore, 50, of Kinnel Bay, Flintshire, admitted during protracted police questioning to more than 17 attacks over 20 years, none of them homicidal. But in May 1994, his mother died, an event which may have triggered "an extremely ugly change in character", Mr Carille said.

Moore, owner of four small cinemas, denies four charges of murder. The killings were carried out during three months beginning in September last year, Mr Carille said Moore had

met the victims by chance. He expected to be caught after ending his killing spree with the murder of his bank manager.

His first victim, Henry Roberts, 56, coincidentally shared with his killer an enthusiasm for Nazi paraphernalia. Mr Roberts tried to protest he was not Jewish as Moore launched 27 blows with a combat knife he had bought a few days earlier for £25. The body was left in the yard outside Mr Roberts' isolated home near Valley, Anglesey.

A month later, Keith Randles, 49, a security manager, opened the door of his caravan late at night on a construction site near Mona, Anglesey, to be attacked by Moore, who stabbed him 12 times. Moore later told police that when Mr Randles asked why he was being attacked, he was told it was for fun. "He looked nonplussed," Moore allegedly had said.

In December, Tony Davies, 35, drove to Pensa Beach near Colwyn Bay, a meeting place near his home for homosexual men. Moore told detec-

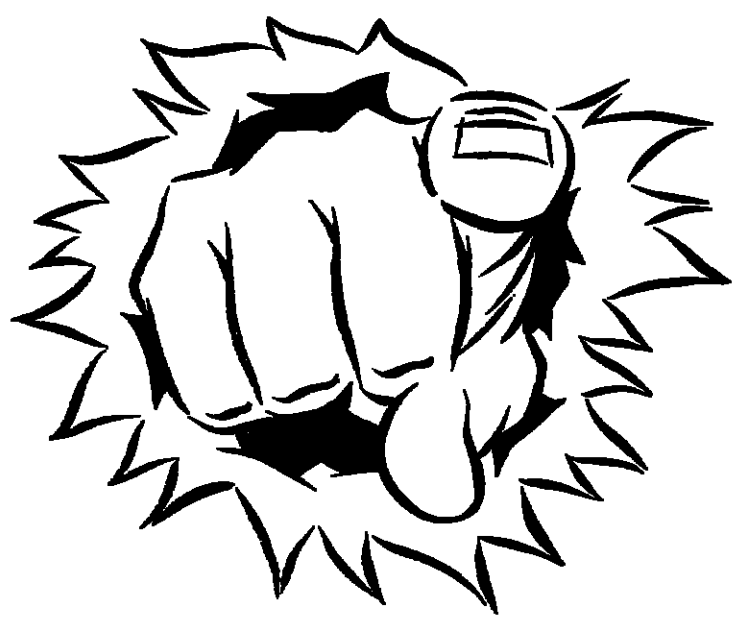
tives that he had been cruising the area when he saw Mr Davies expose himself.

Mr Carille said Moore killed him with six stabs. Blood found on the beach was matched by DNA profile to Moore. The wound had been caused as Mr Davies fought for his life.

When police searched Moore's home, where he lived alone, they found property belonging to his victims in the house and in a garden pond. A knife bearing traces of the blood of a number of men was found in a bag belonging to Moore. It was similar to the blade scientific evidence would claim was used on the four men.

Moore's other victim was killed between October and December 1995. Edward Carthy, 28, from Birkenhead, was a drug addict and drunk whom Moore met in a homosexual bar in Liverpool, Mr Carille said. The pair drove to North Wales, Mr Carthy drunk but trying to escape from Moore's van. He was stabbed to death and buried in dense forest near Ruthin.

The trial continues.



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His name is synonymous with the West End musical, but last night Cameron Mackintosh faced his biggest test



Determined to succeed: Sir Cameron Mackintosh (right, at a production of 'Cats') is hoping to turn round 'Martin Guerre' (left) despite the critics' attacks

Photographs: PA

Can theatre's man with the Midas touch restore his shine?

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Theatre watchers on both sides of the Atlantic were waiting last night to see whether the West End's producer with the Midas touch has lost his grip on the public pulse or pulled off another miracle.

Sir Cameron Mackintosh's £4m musical *Martin Guerre*, the soldier who "returns" to his village after years away and re-encounters his wife, itself returned after a short break, with a £500,000 facelift.

Critics arrived at the Prince Edward Theatre to re-review the show they attacked in July as being at times incomprehensible and lacking a memorable score.

They would not normally re-review a show that has been revised during its run. But a Cameron Mackintosh

show is not normal in any sense of the word.

The 50-year-old impresario has been producing in the West End since the age of 20 but since 1981 and his hit *Cats*, a new Cameron Mackintosh production has been a theatrical event and its success or failure a barometer for the state of the musical, the West End, and, not wholly flippantly, Britain's balance of payments.

So far *Martin Guerre* has not cut the mustard. It has been averaging 60 per cent houses. For the producer of *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon* and *The Phantom of the Opera* that is a slap in the face. It is above break-even point (that is £140,000 a week on a £280,000 capacity take) but only just. And only just is not enough for investors in a West End show. Some weeks it has even dipped below

break-even and with advance bookings beginning to slide its health was looking precarious.

Besides, the financial side of this story is only a part of it. There is also Sir Cameron's own psyche to take into account. The man whose first job was sweeping the stage on the first production of Lionel Bart's *Oliver* has come to represent West End theatre.

He even has a revival of *Oliver* at the London Palladium and generously gives Bart a percentage of the takings. He owns two West End theatres, the Prince Edward and the Prince of Wales, and is keen to acquire more. He is self-effacing, popular and generous, but he is no longer used to failure.

Last night Sir Cameron himself arrived at the Prince Edward Theatre armed with statistics.

To anyone who asks him if his £4m musical can be saved, even with the substantial rewrite and re-direction that last night's relaunch showed, Sir Cameron can produce three pages of research about great musicals that needed time to settle.

Oklahoma, he will tell you, was considered a disaster and its premiere was dismissed with one classic quote "No Gals, No Gags, No Chance". *West Side Story*, *Porgy and Bess* and *Carousel* also suffered early reverses. Even his own *Les Misérables* was "considerably modified" after a shaky start.

If this sounds like the reaction of a worried man, or a man eager to justify his decision to relaunch a much criticised show and save a £3m investment, it could be because Britain's most successful theatrical producer, the multimillionaire with

the Midas touch, has been having a rocky time.

A year that started with a knighthood has recently turned sour with *Martin Guerre*. After initial reviews found the show incomprehensible and lacking a memorable score it played to barely adequate houses. Advances plummeted after unfavourable and sometimes inaccurate press coverage from £25,000 a day to £10,000 a day.

He has now ploughed a further £500,000 into revamping *Martin Guerre*, changing, he claims, up to 60 per cent of the show in the process.

A trip across the Atlantic last month offered little solace. Looking in on the Broadway production of *Les Misérables* Sir Cameron found it looking stale with 19-year-old students being played by actors well into their 40s. He decided to sack a size-

able number of the cast and found himself in conflict, not for the first time, with American Equity.

Part of the problem is Sir Cameron's perfectionism. He likes to see his blockbuster shows kept fresh with regular cast renewals even when they are displaying household names. Part of the problem is his self-belief. After years of massive success he agrees that it is "psychologically difficult to accept that a show may have failed". It is this same bullish self-belief that allows him to claim that while sacking cast members of *Les Misérables* he is their champion in the fight for better contracts on Broadway.

And so last night saw a second first night, a second wave of high profile press publicity, a second stylish after show party and the same set of critics writing a second set of reviews.

The six musicals you should see first

Miss Saigon: Everything that *Martin Guerre* should have been. This production is both gripping, visually striking with helicopter et al, and its climax (even for those who have seen it before in *Madam Butterfly*) is so poignant one can hear the sniffles all round the theatre. The *Martin Guerre* composers Boublil and Schönberg give *Miss Saigon* a score both stirring and tender.

Sunset Boulevard: Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's most recent creation was revamped à la *Martin Guerre* and is all the stronger for it. At least three showstoppers in a compelling and ultimately quite moving production, even if the current Norma Desmond, Petula Clark, is not the most obvious nor the most convincing choice.

Guns And Dolls: When Richard Eyre's production first appeared in 1980 theatregoers slept outside the National to buy tickets for the first time since Laurence Olivier's *Othello*. Next month's revival is a welcome return for a show with more humour and energy than all the other musicals in London put together. Imelda Staunton as Miss Adelaide should be a comic treat.

Oliver! Slightly anodyne direction by Sam Mendes in this revival, but Lionel Bart's music and the inimitable rhymes in his lyrics ('Oliver, that was the mite with the large appetite') more than stand the test of time. It is a tribute to the generosity of producer Cameron Mackintosh that he is giving Bart a share of the royalties, even though there is no contractual obligation to do so.

The Phantom Of The Opera: Another Mackintosh production, another Lloyd Webber score; both enhanced by direction and design which give the story a disturbing atmosphere. More memorable than the longer running *Cats* by the same producer-composer team, and the only show in town for which you really do have to book up months ahead.

Blood Brothers: Not a Mackintosh or Lloyd Webber in sight, but this Willy Russell show engenders great affection. A Liverpool sob story on a smaller scale than its blockbuster neighbours, it has proved a genuine family hit and could yet outlast its richer and more famous musical competitors.

David Lister



Butter imports spread new discord with New Zealand

David Barber in
Wellington, New Zealand
Charlie Bain

Relations have soured between Britain and New Zealand amid allegations of a Europe-wide campaign to protect home producers against butter imports.

The row centres on the import of spreadable butter, which is malleable straight from the fridge and has quickly become a popular alternative to blocks of spread hard enough to bend knives and tear bread. Anchor is at present the only company selling the product in the UK and has enjoyed booming sales as a result.

This success was soured last week when several New Zealand Dairy Board executives in Britain were technically "arrested" by UK Customs and Excise officers who claimed that technically the product was not butter as defined by the EU. Although the raw materials are the same, the manufacturing process for the new product is different.

Sir Dryden Spring, chairman of the New Zealand Dairy Board, reacted angrily to the claim, saying British Customs was trying to block imports of spreadable butter from New Zealand by alleging it did not qualify for entry under the EU quota for reduced import duty.

Under international trade rules, New Zealand has been allowed to export nearly 77,000 tonnes of butter a year to the EU. The Board saw last week's move as part of a bid to erect trade barriers and protect European dairy farmers. Sir Dryden said it was another example



A question of duty: EU regulations mean Anchor spreadable butter is ineligible for a concession on import tariff

of the dairy trade being "subject to interference, control and distortion by foreign governments". He likened trading with the EU to peeling "the layers of an onion - there is always another restriction underneath."

Neville Martin, a spokesman for the New Zealand Dairy

Board added: "Under the British investigation, officials are looking at everything they can get their hands on in relation to New Zealand butter. Some of it smacks strongly of attempts to slap non-tariff trade barriers on New Zealand."

The board refused to say how many of its officials were being questioned by British customs.

UK Customs and Excise were equally cagey. Although officials spent yesterday morning deep in discussion on the subject, they later refused to give details, saying that they didn't comment on individual cases. However, they did confirm that they had received a written ruling from the European Commission four months ago saying that spreadable butter from New Zealand did not meet the qualifying conditions to benefit from the reduced import duty.

The ruling said the reason for this apparently was because it is not "directly manufactured from milk and cream" a spokeswoman said yesterday.

The move could spell disaster for Anchor, which has seen sales rise sharply by 33 per cent year on year, since the new butter was launched in Britain in 1993. The firm sold 5,000 tonnes of spreadable butter last year.

If the British move succeeds, spreadable butter would be subject to a punitive rate of duty which would remove it from British shelves. The New Zealand government has taken up the issue with the European Commission in Brussels.

The British inquiry follows the seizure of a shipment of New Zealand Anchor butter by Dutch Customs in September last year. The Dutch claimed tests showed the butter contained too much fat to qualify for entry under New Zealand's EU quota and imposed an extra duty of NZ\$1.8m. New Zealand has lodged an appeal and the case is continuing.

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politics

Brown under fire over Social Chapter plans

John Rentoul and Michael Harrison

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, defended Labour's promise to sign the European Social Chapter to the CBI conference yesterday, under hostile fire from government ministers. Despite advance headlines proclaiming that he would not give up Britain's power to block some social legislation, he stuck

to Labour's existing policy, which is to give up blocking powers in some areas but not in others.

Mr Brown told the CBI in Harrogate that a Labour government would not accept the extension of majority voting to matters of social security or require companies to appoint worker-directors, which would take away Britain's right to stop Euro-directives.

He said: "We will veto any attempt to do so."

But in three other areas covered by the Social Chapter, Labour has long been prepared to consider giving up Britain's blocking power. They are: redundancy, conditions for migrant workers, and funds for job creation.

Jan Lang, President of the Board of Trade, accused Mr Brown of trying to perpetrate a

"disgraceful con-trick." He said Mr Brown - like Tony Blair in his speech to the CBI last year - was trying to give the impression that Britain could choose which aspects of the Social Chapter it accepted.

"When Tony Blair suggested last year that Labour could 'pick and mix' from the Social Chapter, his deception was put down to naivety. For Gordon Brown to try to pull the same

deception again this year is treating British business with contempt," Mr Lang said.

He was backed by Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, who pointed out that signing up to the Social Chapter - which Labour has promised to do by 1 January 1998 - would commit Britain to accept the outcome of majority votes on the existing core headings of the Chapter.

"It is not an à la carte menu," Mr Heseltine said.

The Social Chapter, a protocol attached to the Maastricht Treaty from which the Prime Minister negotiated an opt-out for Britain, provides for majority voting on five subjects, including the broadly-defined "working conditions".

Michael Portillo, Secretary of State for Defence, also in Harrogate, described the Chapter

as "a catalogue of job-destroying measures" based on "an outdated, trade union-driven anti-management agenda".

He added: "It is also immoral because it offers the prospect of rights and benefits to some which can only be provided by putting others out of work."

Mr Brown, also gave his clearest indication yet that a Labour government would set its inflation target at or below

the present 2.5 per cent level. "We will not be satisfied with simply talking as tough as the Tories. For, unlike the government, we plan to deliver on our inflation target," he said.

Mr Brown's aides pointed out that the present underlying inflation rate, 2.9 per cent, is not only well above the target for the end of this parliament, it is also higher than the European Union average of 2.4 per cent.

Dear Tony, Don't you worry about being too smarmy. Bill had the same problem ...

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

President Clinton's advisers have already drawn up a strategy for Tony Blair in the run-up to the election, designed to deal with the perception that the Labour leader is too packaged and comes from a privileged background.

With George Stephanopoulos, one of the American President's closest aides, set to travel to Britain to talk to Labour's election team, secret memos drawn up for Mr Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign provide a striking insight into American thinking.

Some of the supposed problems faced by Mr Blair before the general election are uncannily similar to those facing Mr Clinton as he prepared to take on George Bush after winning the Democratic nomination. A report called the Manhattan Project listed his team's conclusions of research with small focus groups of floating voters:

1. Clinton is not real. He is packaged.
2. Clinton is privileged, like the Kennedys.
3. Clinton cannot stand up to the special interests.
4. Clinton cannot be the candidate of change.
5. Clinton is for himself, not for people.
6. Clinton's message-ideas are discounted.

The findings echo those of Labour's private polls, which identified some of the reasons older women in particular were sceptical about Mr Blair. He is thought to be smarmy, too smooth and even too much like an American political candidate. His privileged background and the rows over his and Harriet Harman's choice of school, reinforced perceptions that he "says one thing and does another".

The Manhattan Project document said: "The core problem of the Clinton candidacy is Clinton's essential 'political' nature."

It recommended a "fundamental rethinking of your campaign", and concluded: "The campaign has to take radical steps to depoliticise Bill Clinton." In another memo Mandy Gruenwald, a 1992 Clinton team member who visited Mr Blair at the time of his election to the Labour leadership, argued that "moments of passion, personal reflection and humor do more for us than any six-second soundbite on the national news".

Mr Clinton's advertisements recalled the moment, aged 15, when he stood up to his drunken stepfather, and the candidate fought back against sexual allegations on a television talk show, winning cheers from the studio audience by accusing the host of being "responsible for the cynicism in this country, you don't want to talk about the real issues".

On this side of the Atlantic Mr Blair departed from the text of his Blackpool conference speech last month to recall the moment, aged 11, when his father suffered a stroke that deprived him of the power of speech for three years. The experience taught him the value of the family, he said. "I don't pretend to you that I had a deprived childhood. I didn't, but I learnt a sense of values in my childhood."

Although the similarities between the Clinton and Blair strategies are largely coincidental, the close contacts between the two camps mean that there is much common thinking.

The Clinton memos, revealed in Martin Walker's book, *The President They Deserve*, include Ms Gruenwald's argument that, "in tandem with our high-road, serious speech effort, we ought to design a parallel track of pop culture national and local media efforts". This is similar to the approach pursued by Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary, of selling the "real" Mr Blair to the tabloid press and popular broadcasters.

Makeover man: Labour is worried that Blair is seen as privileged

How the work directive affects you

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Who will the working directive affect?
The directive is designed to cover most of the working population, but it is imprecisely worded. The most predictable effect will be that the hours worked by lawyers will increase (and so will their earnings).

How many people work more than 48 hours?
Around 4 million regularly work more than 48 hours, but not all of them are covered.

Are we talking about 48 hours a week or an annual average?
The working time limit is meant to be averaged over a four-month reference period, but there is pro-

EU's 48-hour rule to open new era for employers and staff

vision for it to be extended by law or collective agreement to either six or 12 months.

Will it apply to staff in public and private sectors?

Yes. Public-sector workers and those who are employed by private companies, which are both considered to be "emanations of the state", have a better chance of invoking the directive from 23 November than workers elsewhere. Managements will be under an immediate obligation to comply; unions are prepared to take court action if their rights are ignored.

Which industries will be excluded?
Air, rail, road, sea, inland wa-

terway, lake transport, sea fishing and maritime industries. However, the European Commission is planning legislation to include them eventually.

Any other exceptions?

Some employees will not be included even in industries which are covered by the directive. Exempted are employees who determine their own hours or where the amount of time they work is not measured or predetermined. Examples given are "managing executives or other persons with autonomous decision-making powers"; people who work for their families; and those who officiate at religious ceremonies. Doctors in training are also excluded.

What if someone refuses to work more than 48 hours?
Because the 48 hours is an average over a period, no one can suddenly down tools after 48 hours have elapsed. For employees to invoke the directive, they would have to prove they had been made to work more than 48 hours over a period of four months and that they were not categorised among the exceptions. Peter Reid, the expert on the subject at the Engineering Employers' Federation, believes a complainant might have to wait two or three years for a result.

What are the other main provisions?
An equally important clause

gives a guaranteed minimum three weeks' annual leave rising to four weeks in 1999. Almost 2.5 million employees have no paid leave; 4.1 million get less than three weeks and 5.9 million are entitled to less than four weeks. Other provisions are a maximum average eight-hour shift in 24 hours for night workers; a rest break after six hours non-stop work; Rest periods of 11 hours daily and 35 hours weekly.

In the end, will it make any difference?
The Government thinks not - because there are too many loopholes in the proposed legislation - while unions think they will be able to negotiate improvements.

Heseltine accused over Tory cheerleaders

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, insisted yesterday that his plan to recruit Conservative "cheerleaders" in the public services had never specified that it should be carried out by civil servants.

John Prescott, deputy Labour leader, told Mr Heseltine in the Commons that a leaked memorandum from him to the Prime Minister "shows that far from being the person who sorted out the scandal of civil servants being used for party political purposes, you were the man who had the idea to begin with. You were caught red handed trying

to subvert the impartiality of the Civil Service."

Mr Heseltine retorted: "You know full well that that is a travesty of the truth."

Giles Radice, Labour chairman of the Commons Public Service Select Committee, protested that the memo "broke the spirit and the letter of the Civil Service Code", which requires its servants to be politically neutral.

Mr Heseltine replied: "No, it certainly did not. It left open the question of how ministers should address the issue covered in the memorandum and with Sir Robin Butler [the Cabinet Secretary] I agreed it should be done through special advisers." However, all the leaked corre-

spondence about the plan was between civil servants.

Mr Prescott demanded clarification of further apparent attempts to engage public servants in pro-Tory propaganda. A new leaked document from Mr Heseltine's department said "representatives of the police and magistrates" should be involved in the initiative.

Labour also attacked the business tour by the President of the Board of Trade, Jan Lang, which, according to Margaret Beckett, Labour's trade spokeswoman, started yesterday "in one marginal seat and heading off for a few others, and is being organised by civil servants in the DTI and paid for by the DTI".

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Dangers of the wild now lurking on city streets



City dwellers: Traditionally shy, foxes may be losing their fear of humans as they become increasingly common in urban areas

Louise Jury

Wildlife experts expressed amazement yesterday at an attack by a fox on a baby in his pram in a city suburb.

Frank Wheeler, head of small mammals at London Zoo, and Dr David Macdonald, head of Oxford University's wildlife conservation research unit, said they were astounded at the reported incident.

The five-month-old baby, Phillip Sheppard, needed hospital treatment on Friday after he was bitten on the face.

Alerted by her son's crying, Elena Sheppard, 36, ran into the conservatory of her home in Norbury, south London, to find the fox on top of him.

Mrs Sheppard and her husband, Marc, 37, a computer consultant, said there was blood on the baby's mouth and teeth marks on his lips. He was put on a course of antibiotics after a check-up at the Mayday Hospital in Croydon.

Mrs Sheppard said yesterday: "The baby is OK, but it was a shock for him. The fox was biting my son's lips. I saw it with my own eyes. I would like people not to feed the foxes,

because they're not scared of people any more."

Dr David Macdonald, of Oxford University, said the incident was "astounding". Foxes normally ran away rather than come into contact with people.



Shocked: Elena Sheppard with baby son Phillip

hectares. "A lot of people get enormous pleasure from putting food out and watching foxes," he added.

Mr Wheeler at London Zoo said: "For a fox to attack a child in a house is something I've never heard of. They're naturally one of the shyest animals. They are not dangerous. They have a very weak bite. But there's a definite trend for them to lose their fear of people because they're not being hunted."

He said other countryside animals were also appearing in towns, such as rabbits. Rats and mice, now common, were rural inhabitants in the past.

Professor Stephen Harris of Bristol University has estimated there are about 420,000 adult foxes in Britain with 425,000 cubs born every year.

A spokeswoman for the Sheppards' local authority, the London Borough of Croydon, said they had adopted the London Wildlife Trust's fox code to enable residents and foxes to live alongside each other.

They issued advice to residents on how to deter foxes if they wanted to and if necessary their pest control people could try to catch nuisance animals.

Victory for parents over head's sacking

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Governors at Cheltenham College, whose dismissal of the school's head is being fought by parents, have agreed to an independent inquiry into the sacking.

The inquiry, to be carried out by Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Cheltenham-based Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, is examining whether the governors followed the correct procedures in dismissing Peter Wilkes.

Mr Wilkes was dismissed after the school slipped from 147th to 205th in A-level league tables. Governors who include General Sir John Waters, former deputy supreme allied commander Europe and Sir Michael Perry, chairman of Unilever, also criticised his managerial style and his relationships with senior staff.

But a meeting of parents voted by 620 to 7 in favour of Mr Wilkes' reinstatement and of the resignation of the school council (governors). They were also angry that they were initially given no explanation of the head's dismissal.

The case has highlighted the power of governors in private schools. All state schools are required to have elected parents on their governing bodies but independent schools are not. Cheltenham parents, who pay fees of around £12,000 a year, say they should be told more about what is going on.

When parents first asked for an explanation for Mr Wilkes' dismissal from Air Commodore

David Atherton, the council's secretary, they were told "matters between the council and its employees are confidential".

Later, governors sent a letter giving a more detailed explanation. They praised Mr Wilkes' gifts as a schoolmaster and his dedication to the school. They pointed out that the school's league table position was not the only reason for his dismissal, though they believed exam results were important.

Yesterday Mark Hicks Beach, chairman of the parents' committee, said the parents' demands were unchanged. "We are quite happy for Mr Higgins to investigate. We want to know the truth about the procedures behind Mr Wilkes' dismissal."

"We hope the inquiry will recommend that the constitution of Cheltenham College should be totally reorganised. There should be more local members and it should not be self-electing."

He said parents should have more communication with the council but he was not sure that necessarily meant having elected parent governors.

Two governors have resigned in protest against the decision to give Mr Wilkes two terms' notice, but the rest of the council cannot constitutionally be forced to resign.

Parents met five members of the council on Friday and a further meeting will take place on Sunday.

They fear that the change of head will mean a change of ethos at the school and that pupils who are unlikely to excel in exams will be thrown out.



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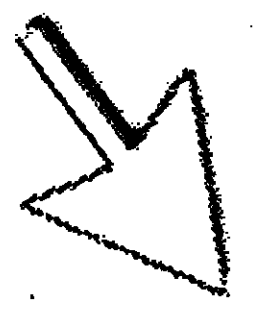


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Woman student 'stalking lecturer'

A university lecturer claimed in court yesterday that he was being stalked by a woman student who believed he had "improper sexual desires" for her.

Dr Robert Fine, aged 50, is seeking a High Court injunction to stop Eileen McLardy, 21, from coming to his home and is claiming damages for 140 lost occasions of harassment between 1994 and 1995.

Ashtley Underwood, who is representing the senior lecturer in sociology, said the incidents began when Mrs McLardy was a part-time student at the university. She was also nursing a sick mother and a child and "it appears she came under a great deal of stress and got it into her head that Dr Fine harboured some sort of improper sexual desires towards her."

"This turned into a vendetta against him," he told Judge Thompson QC.

Mr Underwood said Mrs McLardy, 30, constantly paraded outside his house in Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, "with an eerie fixed grin on her face" until she had made sure she had been seen. He said Dr Fine's home was opposite a

leisure centre where Mrs McLardy is a member and he does not complain about her right to be there. But it was the way she makes her way to and from the leisure centre which "makes his life so miserable".

"At work she has been standing and staring at him and follows him around the campus," he said. "We say it is deliberate contact designed to make his life miserable."

When asked about what she was doing, "she says it is a free world and she can do what she likes, and he deserves it because of what she said he did to her".

Mr Underwood said there had been attacks on Dr Fine's car which had been damaged or driven away on several occasions. "More eerie still is what happened to his house. On one occasion somebody got into Dr Fine's house and turned off the central heating radiators and left the hot tap running. Bizarre behaviour, we say."

Dr Fine is seeking an order from the High Court restraining Mrs McLardy, of Tile Hill Lane, Coventry, from molesting or harassing him and stopping her from approaching within 30 feet of his home. The case continues.

news

Jobs to die for – work takes grim toll on children of the world

Louise Jury

Child workers around the world are being exposed to a number of lethal hazards including pesticide poisoning and toxic fumes in sweat-shop factories.

And according to a United Nations report published today the problem is twice as big as was previously thought, with an estimated 250 million children being forced to work for their keep.

The rise in sexual exploitation for profit and risks of children working with chemicals and in dangerous industry require urgent action and a new international convention focusing on the worst abuses, the report claims.

The revised estimate of the scale of exploitation has been produced by the International Labour Office (ILO), the UN's

agency for work issues, using new methods of assessing the problem.

The ILO is now demanding the concentration of resources to tackle the most hazardous types of child labour. Asafa Bequele, the report's author, said yesterday: "We're not saying that any child labour is tolerable, but for pragmatic reasons we suggest that we should focus on the most intolerable forms."

Although international pressure and governmental action has improved the lives of many, Mr Bequele said there was evidence that where children were still employed, it tended to be in more dangerous situations. Children as young as three were reported in factories producing matches and fireworks.

The report claims 120 million children under the age of 14 work full time and 130 million



Sweat shop: Child carpet-weavers in India work up to 12 hours a day, six days a week, in conditions which are dark, dangerous and poorly ventilated

Photograph: Ian Berry/Magnum

part time. The biggest problem was in Asia (153 million child workers), with 80 million in Africa, and 17.8 million in Latin America. However, Europe was not excluded with a rise in sexual exploitation in eastern European countries and a much smaller problem with child labour in places like the UK.

The main problem areas are: ■ **Prostitution and trafficking of children** – The ILO claims at

least five international networks exist, including from Latin America to Europe and the Middle East and from South and South East Asia to northern Europe. Several African countries, including Kenya and Zimbabwe, are seeing a rise in the numbers involved.

■ **Agriculture** – Children can be found mixing, loading and applying pesticides and fertilisers, some of which are highly toxic.

Mortality among Sri Lankan children farm workers from pesticides poisoning is reportedly greater than from a combination of diseases including malaria, tetanus, diphtheria and polio.

■ **Ceramics and glass factory work** – Common in Asia where children carry molten loads of glass. The temperature inside the factories ranges from 40 to 45°C and the noise level from machinery can be as high as 100

decibels. Other hazards include exposure to silica dust and lead and toxic fumes.

■ **Deep-sea fishing** – In many Asian countries, particularly Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, boys spend up to 12 hours in water banging on coral reefs to scare the fish into nets. Dozens are killed or injured each year from drowning or decompression illness.

Michelle Hansenne, the ILO's director-general, said child labour was one of the faces of poverty, and efforts over many years were required to eliminate it completely.

But she added: "There are some forms of child labour today which are intolerable by any standard. These deserve to be identified, exposed and eradicated without delay."

Former NHS manager faces investigation over contracts

Susan Emmett

A former senior health manager is facing investigation by auditors following allegations that he used his public post to set up two lucrative contracts with a private firm he later joined as director.

George Walker is alleged to have used his position as commissioning director for Sheffield

Health Authority to award contracts worth £35,000 to a new GP co-operative and £100,000 to Primary Care Multifund Ltd, a GP management company which manages the co-operative. He formally joined PCM as director the day after he retired from the health authority last August.

But a document lodged at Companies House and seen by

The Independent, shows that Mr Walker became director of PCM as early as 29 April.

The Sheffield Health Authority removed Mr Walker from his post as soon as they became aware of his involvement with PCM at the end of July. But he continued to work for the authority in another capacity until he took early retirement at the end of August.

"There was a potential conflict of interest and we did not want any question of a conflict of interest," Cathy Hamlyn, health authority chief executive, said. "This is a matter of probity and public services do have to keep their standards."

The health authority has only recently become aware of the document lodged at Companies House and the district audit of-

fice was asked to investigate at the beginning of October.

Although the £35,000 contract with the GP co-operative has been approved, the health authority is now waiting until the auditors complete their investigation before approving the contract with PCM.

Mr Walker's actions were initially exposed by the Sheffield Community Health Council,

the patients' watchdog. "He clearly contravened rules of accountability and codes of conduct," Janet Boyleveld, chief officer for the CHC, said.

"This raises a number of questions on how he could continue to deny any involvement," she said. "Until there is a full independent investigation, we will continue to have concerns about the co-operative

and the way that Mr Walker behaved."

But Mr Walker said he was not actively involved with PCM until the beginning of September and that he thought the health authority was aware of his appointment. "All I did was act as a reference point for the forms that came in," he said. "I was basically a post box." In his former post at the

health authority, Mr Walker saw his role as encouraging fund-holding in all its forms.

He said that his early involvement with PCM and setting up the new GP co-operative was part of his job and that he was happy to face investigation.

"I'm quite happy for the auditors to go in because I'm completely innocent," he said.

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STOCK PHOTOGRAPH



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مستشفى الرحمة

Hormones in sewage changing sex of fish

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Natural female hormones excreted by women can feminise male fish, Government research has revealed. The concentrations of naturally occurring human female hormones found in effluent from sewage works is extremely low – but still high enough to make male fish start to produce egg yolk protein.

The researchers from Brunel University and the Ministry of Agriculture's fisheries laboratory also found a hormone used in some contraceptive pills, ethinyl oestradiol, was emerging in the effluent. But it was getting through in smaller quantities than oestrone and 17β oestradiol which occur naturally in women's urine.

The research was commissioned by the Government's Environment Agency, which has organised further studies to find out if these three hormones are affecting fish in rivers around the country. "We have a very potent cocktail getting into rivers," said Dr Geoff Brighty, a fisheries scientist with the agency. "We have to be precautionary and see if there is an impact."

The hormones exert their influence at an astonishingly low concentration – less than ten billionths of a gram per litre. That is equivalent to one gram of hormone in 100,000 tonnes of water, equivalent to a small lake. It required a genetically engineered strain of yeast to filter out the oestrogens.

More than 10 years ago it was found that some male roach in the river Lea and sewage settlement lagoons alongside it were becoming feminised – their testes were partially ovaries and contained eggs.

This discovery led to research programmes which showed that all around Britain

male trout and roach kept in cages next to sewage works outlets started to produce the egg yolk protein vitellogenin. Something in the watery, cleaned-up effluent was feminising them.

The latest research, published today, establishes that it is the three female hormones which are to blame – and not any of the tens of thousands of other chemicals found at low concentrations in sewage effluent. The finding is significant because scientists have suggested that a wide range of synthesised chemicals used in detergents, plastic product manufacture and agriculture can act as oestrogen mimics.

There are places overseas where such chemicals have altered the sexual characteristics and behaviour of wildlife species after chronic pollution or accidental spillages.

There are fears that these chemicals are also contributing to falling sperm counts, genital malformations in baby boys and the rising incidence of testicular cancer in some western nations. Environmental pressure groups are devoting increasing resources to campaigning about this threat. The Government is setting new targets for curbing pollution in an effort to improve the nation's health. They cover indoor and outdoor air quality, noise, lead in drinking water and levels of radon – a radioactive gas which wells up from the ground naturally and can cause lung cancer.

Hitting these targets depends as much upon the actions of local councils, doctors and public health officials, voluntary groups and individual families as it does upon the actions of central government, John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, said yesterday. The new targets are now part of the "Health of the Nation" strategy, which set 27 targets in 1992.

Lord Menuhin seeks benefactor to buy violin for young virtuoso, but it won't come cheap ...



Perfect harmony: Leland Chen, 31, plays the 1694 Stradivarius violin which he hopes will be his to play after its auction at Phillips next week

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

300 and still in tune: what's so special about a Strad?

Marianne Macdonald
Arts Correspondent

A brilliant Taiwanese violinist has so impressed Yehudi Menuhin that he has written an open letter asking for a benefactor to donate a violin worthy of the virtuoso.

Lord Menuhin has discovered that the perfect instrument does not come cheap. Leland Chen, 31, believes his perfect musical match is a 1694 Stradivarius, to be auctioned at Phillips on Tuesday next week. It is expected to fetch up to £700,000 – 70 times the value of his present instrument – and the only way he can play it is if a benefactor buys it for him.

The instrument, known as the Baillot-Pommeroy violin after two of its earliest owners, has an unusual depth and tonal richness, even compared with the five other Stradivarius violins he has played. "It is the marriage of the player and the instrument that makes a difference, and for some unknown reason this one seems to really work for me," Mr Chen said yesterday.



Lord Menuhin with Elgar, whose Violin Concerto he recorded in 1932 Photograph:EMI

Maureen Phillips, Mr Chen's manager, has approached British Petroleum and BT – due to merge with MCI to create Concert – with the suggestion that they might buy the violin

and lend it to Mr Chen because their names have the appropriate initials or associations. Although neither has yet made a commitment to sponsor Mr Chen, an unnamed woman

Elvis, Lenin and the Stradivarius

■ The 'Mendelssohn' Stradivarius violin was the most expensive musical instrument, sold for £902,000 at Christie's in 1990

■ Stradivarius violins were covered in propolis – the same substance used to embalm Lenin's body

■ Elvis played the violin and is rumoured to have owned a Strad. Nigel Kennedy's Strad was sold to an American collector for \$1.5m

■ Julian Lloyd Webber's Strad cello is so precious to him that he sleeps with it every night by his bed.

a company will buy it and I could have it on loan," he said. "But we have had very little time since we discovered the violin."

Antonio Stradivari, who died 259 years ago, would not be surprised to learn that he is still considered the maker of the world's finest violins, with followers including Anne-Sophie Mutter and Nigel Kennedy.

The plaque on his house in the Piazza Roma, in Cremona, Lombardy, notes that Stradivari "brought the violin to perfection and left to Cremona an imperishable name as master of his craft".

He learnt his trade in Nicolo Amati's workshop, and began putting his own name to violins in the 1660s. But it was only after 1684, when Stradivari turned to larger-built instruments, that his genius blossomed. He made the Baillot-Pommeroy in 1694, but his finest violins are believed to date from 1700.

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news

Incompetent dentists facing tough new curbs

Ian Burrell

Health ministers are preparing tough new disciplinary measures to curtail the activities of inadequate dentists who continue to work privately after being censured by disciplinary bodies following allegations against them over their NHS work.

Patients are alleged to have had metal dental instruments left inside their gums, healthy teeth destroyed by unnecessary treatment and been reduced to a diet of soup and soft foods. In other cases, dentists have claimed payment for work they have not done.

The measures, in a draft Bill which will form part of an amendment to the Dentists Act 1986, follow concern by the General Dental Council, the regulatory body for Britain's 30,000 dentists, that it does not have enough disciplinary powers.

The council is being asked to examine allegations concerning William Duff, a Glasgow dentist, Mr Duff who is in his thirties, until recently had a practice at Maryhill Road, Glasgow, and has now moved to Kil-



Biting back: The new disciplinary measures will offer greater protection for patients receiving treatment outside the National Health Service

Photograph: David Sandison

barchan, Renfrewshire. Mr Duff was fined £1,500 and struck off a list of NHS-approved dentists by Greater Glasgow Health Board last year for failure to maintain ade-

quate records, but he can continue to work privately. In its adjudication on the case of Moanne Russell, 33, the health board complained there were many discrepancies be-

tween Mrs Russell's treatment record and the form Mr Duff completed for NHS payment, and that he had claimed for work not completed.

Mr Duff's case is likely to go before the council's professional conduct committee. Last night, in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, Maria Fyfe, the Labour MP for Glasgow Maryhill, argued that

not enough is being done to safeguard patients who suffer lasting pain and disfigurement from shoddy dentistry. She is concerned that the growth of the private sector is

making the problem worse. On Friday, a High Court judge granted permission for 92 patients jointly to pursue damages against dentist Barry Garrett, who now practises in Sale, Cheshire. If their complaints are upheld Mr Garrett could face damages claims of up to £2m.

Last year, Mr Garrett, 48, was successfully sued for £185,000 by eight patients who said he had carried out unnecessary treatment on their healthy teeth. Mr Garrett had been struck off by the General Dental Council in 1989 for serious professional misconduct, but was allowed to return to work two years later.

The court was told that patients he treated in Driffield, Humberside, were left traumatised. One victim, Jane Appleton, 25, had 99 tooth surfaces worked on unnecessarily. Dawn Eling, 29, had the broken end of a drill left in one of her teeth and complained that Mr Gar-

rett had laughed after she told him he was hurting her. Her £27,477 damages included £6,000 pounds for psychiatric treatment.

Melanie Fenton, who endured 30 two-hour appointments with Mr Garrett said: "I want this man struck off once and for all. No one should ever be at risk of being put through what we've suffered."

Mr Garrett, who has a degree in dental surgery from Dundee University, was insured and will have all his legal costs paid for by the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland.

Nigel Walshe, a solicitor and former patient of Mr Garrett, who has represented most of the victims after settling out of court himself for £2,000, said: "The judge [in last year's case] recognised the gravity of what the dentist did, so now will the General Dental Council? And if not, why not?"

Stephen Hancock, spokesman for the General Dental Council, said: "The measures in this draft Bill will give the council a variety of extra powers involved with suspension and will also allow greater flexibility."

He said the new measures would give greater protection to dental patients who had treatment outside the NHS. A non-NHS patients' complaints procedure is being set up. It is something that we have been asking for for years."

Currently, private patients who believe they have been victims of sub-standard dentistry can only seek redress through the civil courts. The draft Bill will be completed by the end of next month and will be subject to a period of consultation.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: "It's all to do with powers to act against misconduct in the dental profession and will bring dentists into line with the tight guidelines already imposed on GPs."

DAILY POEM

Airmail

By Kevin Crossley-Holland

When my words fly
to you
I want them fast
and fiery as cardinals.

And soft, I add,
immeasurably soft, straying
and resolute -
thinking of your parts
(your lower lip, for instance).

But more than resolute:
I want them indestructible.
Made of air, and
winging it,
made of shining steel.

Enitharmon has just published Kevin Crossley-Holland's *The Language of Yes*, his first collection since *New and Selected Poems 1965-90*. A poet, but also a librettist, children's writer and translator of Anglo-Saxon tales - *Beowulf* and the *Exeter Book Riddles* amongst them - his work has always been concerned with the omnipresence of the distant past. Here, the concerns are modern.



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Voyage of doubt for US Far East fleet

Richard Lloyd Parry
On board the USS
Independence, Sea of Japan

The bridge of the *Independence*, the US Navy's oldest and most famous aircraft-carrier, encourages feelings of confidence, and Captain Tom Feltin, the commanding officer, has them in abundance. Every minute, a warplane is catapulted into the air from the ship's flight deck. From the bridge, you can just make out the shapes of smaller vessels, American and Japanese, taking part in Operation Keen Sword, an exercise involving 22,000 personnel.

"I have on this boat five thousand of the toughest Americans you're going to find anywhere," he says. "They operate the ship, they arm the aircraft, they work a 16-hour day non-stop. These guys eat nails for breakfast." Only one question appears to trouble the jovial skipper: why is the *Independence* here in the first place?

Not long ago, the answer would have been obvious. As flagship of the Seventh Fleet, its main role was to deter and repel an attack on Japan or the United States' other Asian friends by the Soviet Union. But that threat has evaporated, and nothing has yet taken its place.

Capt Feltin mentions Taiwan, where the *Independence* sailed in April, as China conducted missile tests in the run-up to Taiwanese elections. He mentions North Korea, suspected of planning its own test missile firing. But the question is tricky. "It's difficult to tell exactly where a contingency might arise in this day and age. The reason we're here is to be ready."

Ready for what? This question has dominated East Asian diplomacy since the Cold War ended. On it depend millions of livelihoods, billions of dollars, and the security of the fastest-growing region in the world.

The official answer, on which President Bill Clinton's second-term foreign policy will be based, is in a Defense Department report issued last year. Where US troops once deployed against the Soviet threat, it argues, now they face a different enemy: instability. Like Europe earlier this century, Asia is marked by the rise and fall of great powers.

Regional flash-points, like North Korea and Taiwan, could endanger new markets in Asia. For its own good, as much as those of its allies, the US has responsibility to act as big brother and honest broker, absorbing

Japan of the need to defend itself alone and preventing an arms race. "Security is like oxygen," said the author of the Pentagon report, Joseph Nye, an academic. "You tend not to notice it until you begin to lose it."

When it was published, the report did little more than affirm the *status quo*, but it has been challenged by academics and by events in the region. Among the former are those who argue that in giving Japan a free ride on defence, the US is being taken for a ride of its own, and that security should be a trade-off, with Tokyo opening markets in return for protection. Others say the US umbrella has contributed to poor relations - cushioned from reality by the Seventh Fleet, Japan has never had to develop mature relations with China and Korea, and remains diplomatically stunted.

The most significant objections came in September last year, when a 12-year old girl was raped by US troops in Okinawa,



Seeking a role: A Hornet aircraft being checked on board the *Independence*, flagship of a force whose traditional Soviet foe has evaporated

the small Japanese island which is home to a third of the 100,000 US troops in East Asia.

Whatever it has done for the rest of the region, Dr Nye's security oxygen suffocated Okinawa, a quarter of which is giv-

ing to US bases, with their attendant problems. The uproar forced the two governments to come up with a plan to reduce the bases and, for the first time, Japanese diplomats are contemplating a time when US

troops may withdraw from Japan in large numbers.

In the end, all these cogitations come down to another question: what is the future of China? There is little doubt that, early next century, it will have

the world's largest economy, matched by an enlarged, modernised military. Dr Nye and his president use the word "engagement" to describe their policy towards Peking: to their critics, deployment of 100,000

troops and the dispatch of the *Independence* to Taiwan in April looks like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Having seen off one Cold War adversary, they risk, by their presence, contributing to the creation of another.

China in oil talks with Baghdad

Teresa Poole
Peking

China is holding talks with Iraq to sign what it describes as "massive" oil exploration contracts. The official Xinhua news agency said Peking was negotiating a 5-million-ton-a-year oil production contract with the possibility of helping Iraq set up another field with a capacity of 15 million tons.

Peking has made no secret of its wish to re-establish trade links with Baghdad if United Nations sanctions are lifted. Iraq could help meet China's growing demand for imported crude.

China was an enthusiastic backer of the "oil-for-food" deal brokered by Iraq and the United Nations in May, which would have allowed Baghdad to sell \$2bn (£1,200m) of oil over six months to buy food and medicine. That deal floundered when Iraq intervened in fighting between Kurdish factions in August.

The three-sentence-long report published yesterday by Xinhua gave no specific information about the negotiations between the state oil giant China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Baghdad. But last month the *Middle East Economic Survey* (MEES) reported that Iraq and China had finalised a production-sharing deal to develop the al-Ahdab oilfield in central Iraq. The survey said it was the first such agreement to be initiated by the Iraqi oil authorities and represented "an important challenge to the UN sanctions regime". It is not clear whether this is the same as the negotiations referred to yesterday by

Xinhua. Oil firms from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East have also held talks with Baghdad.

China, whose buoyant economy is driving up oil imports, is eager to reach an understanding with Iraq ahead of any revived "oil-for-food" deal, or an eventual dismantling of the broader economic sanctions. Last year China imported 17 million tons of crude oil and this is forecast to rise to more than 40 million tons by the year 2000 and 100 million tons by 2010.

As one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council China has been a less than enthusiastic supporter of continued sanctions against Iraq, which were imposed in 1990 after the invasion of Kuwait.

In August, when the "oil-for-food" deal was still on track, Chinese oil and trade officials admitted that discussions had been held with Iraq on co-operation in seismic studies and exploration and that some Chinese companies had signed draft contracts on joint exploration. CNPC officials had visited Iraq several times.

Shi Weisan, director-general of the West Asia and Africa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation, was quoted in an official publication as saying he had made a one-week trip to Iraq at the end of July and early August, accompanied by representatives of six Chinese companies. During that trade mission Iraq and China signed a protocol on economic and trade co-operation which provided for expansion in economic and scientific fields.

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Zaire's silent capital braces for mob rule

David Orr
Kinshasa

The population of Kinshasa, the Zairean capital, is bracing itself for violent student demonstrations. The students and their political masters have set today as the deadline for the resignation of Kengo wa Dondo, the Prime Minister. Mr wa Dondo, unpopular as much for his Tutsi ancestry as for his policies, has become the main focus of discontent after the Zairean army's humiliating defeat by Tutsi rebels in the east.

Yesterday the streets were all but deserted and the shops were closed after student activists declared a *ville morte* (dead town). Youths manning makeshift barriers turned back motorists on the road to the airport while troops looked on.

It is now a week since the students started rampaging through the capital's streets. So far two have been shot dead by the military. Every day hundreds of cars are seized by youths and driven around the city, horns blaring. Shortly after leaving the airport my taxi was hijacked by chanting youths, many of them wearing bandannas around

their heads and brandishing imitation machineguns.

Stones and bottles flew through the air as young men danced on the bonnet of the car. One took charge of the wheel while others hustled the driver into the back seat. Finding myself, in effect, kidnapped I opened the door and threw myself out of the moving vehicle. Soldiers at a nearby petrol station were too busy looting beer to take much notice.

The political order, or what stands for such in the anarchy of Zaire, has collapsed since the Tutsi Banyamulenge rebels and their Rwandan allies routed the army. In the vacuum caused by the continuing absence of President Mobutu Sese Seko, the opposition has been able to exploit the frustration of the populace. The man believed to be behind the protests in the capital is Etienne Tshisekedi, an ousted prime minister and opposition leader. However, his support is limited and regional. It is widespread dissatisfaction with Mr wa Dondo rather than any forceful leadership on the part of Mr Tshisekedi that has been the main motor behind the demonstrations.

"I'm afraid that the unrest could spill over into rioting and looting," said a diplomat. "When their emotions are pushed over a certain limit, these people can do a lot of damage. The rank-and-file of the military could easily get fed up and provoke looting."

Looting is a commonplace in this country where the military is paid a pittance or not at all. The last outbreaks occurred in 1991 and 1993. Many feel that only the return of President Mobutu, still recuperating in Europe after a cancer operation, can rescue Zaire.

Kisangani, a large town west of the area in which fighting has taken place, is said to have suffered severely from the ill discipline of the war-weary and poorly provisioned soldiers. Other villages are said to have been ransacked and their inhabitants driven out.

"The military is fragmented and dangerously volatile," said one diplomat. "Mobutu is the only one who can control the army. I believe he will come back soon but the longer he stays away the more uncertain things become."

President Mobutu has ap-



Sole provider: A lone shoeshine boy working on during a general strike in Kinshasa yesterday, as Zaire fell further into anarchy

Photograph: AP

proved United Nations' proposals for the intervention of a multi-national humanitarian protection force in Zaire. But so far no strategy has been agreed for the deployment of

such a force, deemed essential if adequate aid is to reach more than 1 million civilians and refugees who have been displaced by the fighting. It is now understood that there will be no

British participation in any international operation that might be mounted. The International Committee of the Red Cross says its attempts to dispatch airborne relief supplies to the dis-

placed have been frustrated by the authorities in Kinshasa. Officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees were also blocked from visiting the stricken interior.

Mandela ready to send in troops as the West hangs back

Emerging plans for an international operation to intervene in Zaire were trapped in a vicious circle last night. No Western power – the US, Britain or France – is prepared to intervene without a clear objective and a clear picture of what they are going into, what the opposition may be, and how well-armed they are. But without troops on the ground, they have little prospect of finding out.

In Johannesburg, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday he was prepared to send South African troops to central Africa as part of an international force, though he added that he had not decided how big a unit to commit.

Little is known about the principal warring factions: the mainly

Arms are flowing to the rebels from Rwanda, Uganda and Angola, writes **Christopher Bellamy**

Tutsi rebels within Zaire, known as the Banyamulenge – "people from the Mulenge hills": the mainly Hutu former Rwandan government troops who have been sheltering in the refugee camps in Zaire, known as the Interahamwe – "those who fight together"; and the Zairean forces.

The Interahamwe are estimated to be 40,000 strong. There are about 400,000 Banyamulenge people, suggesting they could also field a force of up to 40,000 fighting troops. On the evidence so far, they are relatively well-disciplined. The Banyamulenge control all three airfields in the region: Goma, Bukavu and Kivu,

which would make any attempt by the Zairean government to move troops into the area very difficult.

Africa is awash with arms, though mainly the smaller variety – rifles, machineguns, hand-held anti-tank weapons and mines. They tend to flow to where the market is best. The Banyamulenge have been lying low for some time and would have acquired arms over many years.

More recent supplies come from four main sources: those they have bought or captured from the ill-disciplined Zairean army; from Rwanda – where some of their number fought with the Rwandan Patriotic

Army against the Hutus two years ago; from Uganda, where many members of the current Rwandan government were educated and where links exist which would result in a blind eye being turned to arms shipments into north-eastern Zaire; and lastly from Angola. During the Angolan civil war, arms flowed from Zaire's Shaba province into Angola. More recently, it seems they have started flowing back again via South African and US arms dealers.

Some of the mainly Hutu Interahamwe took part in the genocide against Tutsis two years ago, and have been hiding out in the Zairean

refugee camps. They are now being driven east by the Banyamulenge. They took arms with them when they fled two years ago. There have been rumours that the French had been resupplying them, but the French have denied this categorically and it seems unlikely that they would have continued to do so after the genocide of 1994. However, some arms did pass to the Hutu groups through Goma, with the connivance of the Zairean authorities.

Over the past few days, the main western powers have moved from extreme unwillingness to intervene to one where they will consider inter-

vention if they are given a clear job to do. Two possibilities have been discussed: the creation of a safe area around an airport where the refugees could be concentrated, and the creation of corridors to enable refugees to return gradually to Rwanda.

"No one knows the exact situation on the ground, no one knows what the intervention force would do – intervene between whom and whom?" said a senior diplomat in Nairobi. "You can't go rushing in with troops without knowing what the mission is," said Nicholas Burns, a US State Department spokesman.

The French were to the fore in

proposing intervention, and seemed the most likely to lead the operation, but there are grave reservations because of their history in the area and their former support for the Hutus.

The French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, yesterday tried to calm reports of differences between France and the US over the crisis. "Undoubtedly in the past weeks there were some bitter words exchanged between our two countries and I believe such exchanges were unfortunate," he said. "But there is no conflict of interest between France and the US in Africa".

Mr de Charette said France was ready to contribute 1,000 troops to a 5,000-strong multinational force. Spain has also put 1,000 troops on alert.

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Britons injured as Zambia poll sparks student riots

Lusaka (Reuters) – The government yesterday closed Zambia's largest university after riot police moved in to quell political unrest ahead of next week's general election.

Police used teargas and batons to disperse students demonstrating against a ban on a planned march to the presidential residence. They wanted to protest against a poll on 18 November which many opposition parties intend to boycott.

Closure of the campus follows two days of unrest in which 10 students were arrested and several people injured, including a British Airways crew.

"The University of Zambia has been closed because the atmosphere here is not conducive to academic work," the university senate said in a statement.

The announcement came as students armed with stones fought pitched battles with police and barricaded roads leading into the campus. Traffic on a nearby highway was stopped for part of the morning as students pelted motorists before being driven back by teargas and baton charges. The campus was later sealed off.

Student leaders said they wanted President Frederick Chiluba to reopen dialogue

with his political opponents and possibly suspend polls until all political parties reached consensus on the rules governing the elections. "Today's riot was caused by an unwarranted attempt by police to disrupt a peaceful demonstration by students," a student leader said.

Seven opposition parties, including former president Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP), are boycotting the polls, which they say have been arranged to ensure that the ruling Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) remains in power. The parties are opposed to a

new constitution which bans some candidates, including Mr Kaunda, from contesting the presidential race on the grounds that they are not native-born Zambians. Mr Kaunda was the country's head of state for nearly three decades, leading Zambia to independence and ruling until Mr Chiluba defeated him in polls in 1991.

Opposition parties are also unhappy with the voters' register, which omits 2.3 million of the 4.6 million eligible voters and with the state-owned media's coverage of campaigns which they say favours the ruling party.

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German threat to scupper currency pact

Sarah Helm
Brussels

A growing power battle between Germany and other European countries over who lays down the law for the single currency could prevent agreement in December on a crucial system of budget rules and sanctions. It had been expected that a long-awaited "stability pact", containing rules for governing the use of the euro, would be signed at the Dublin summit in December.

However, European finance ministers, meeting in Brussels yesterday, failed to decide what those laws should be. The ministers were also far from deciding what European body should enforce the laws. Jean Arthuis, the French finance minister, has proposed radical plans, supported by Germany, for a new informal "economic government" to be called a "stability council".

The council would operate as a "G7-style club", modelled on the Group of Seven industrial countries, and consisting of only states inside the single currency. Creation of such an exclusive new political club would have serious implications for Britain, which would be excluded if it "opts out". Yesterday Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, said he was "very sceptical" about the idea of such a "discreet club" which could create new division between those inside economic and monetary union (EMU) and those outside.

The creation of a stability pact and stability council are the single most important building blocks for EMU, and a delay will raise questions about the determination of member states to proceed. Germany, which first proposed a "stability pact" a year ago, wants the rules for budgetary discipline to be as strict as possible in order to ensure that the euro is as strong as the mark. Without firm evidence that its partners will keep their spending under control, Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, fears he may be unable to sell the single currency to his own public. A senior German official said: "It is vital that our government achieves the results it wants. Without an effective stability pact the German public will not be convinced."

German frustration with the laxity of rules currently being proposed has pushed Bonn to threaten to opt out of the current negotiations altogether, by seeking tougher deals with only those countries who qualify to join at a later date. Such deals would be done outside the terms of the Maastricht Treaty. Germany has underpinned its threat by saying it has legal advice that it has the power to go it alone, should other member states not toe its line.

However, most other EU member states, including Britain, hope that Bonn's hard line is a bargaining threat. Germany's stance would place them in an unacceptable economic straight-jacket, they say. Under the complex system of rules for the stability pact now on the table each country inside EMU must accept a sliding scale of fines if it allows its budget deficit to rise above 3 per cent of gross domestic product. Exemptions can be made for countries in "exceptional circumstances" - for example, if they have suffered a natural disaster. Exemptions can also be made in cases of a severe economic downturn. Germany's prime demand is that the "severe economic downturn" be defined far more tightly than the Commission or its partners can accept. Germany is also demanding stricter rules for enforcement of fines against countries which let their budget deficits slip out of line.

As other member states focused on German demands yesterday, Mr Clarke, found himself obliged to justify to Euro-sceptics back home his repeated support for a stability pact. Critics say the pact would force Britain, should it sign up, to an unprecedented transfer of sovereign powers. Public spending and tax would in future be scrutinised by Brussels and the government would be fined if it stepped out of line. However, Mr Clarke yesterday countered that the stability pact can only be good for Britain as it aims to ensure sound economic management, which is already part of government policy. The pact would help keep Euro interest rates down, and this could only be good for Britain whether it is "in" or "out" of the single currency, said the Chancellor.

EU auditors expose 'dodgy' £3bn payouts

Katherine Butler
Brussels

The EU's spending watchdog will today slam European governments for misbehaving at least £3bn in taxpayers' money last year. For the second year running, the European Court of Auditors will announce that it cannot certify the legality and regularity of EU payments - totalling £55bn - because it has found so many discrepancies. The court estimates that almost 6 per cent of all payments from the 1995 budget were subject to "substantial and serious" error.

The court's audit revealed that the transactions underlying the payments for the financial year contained too many errors for the court to be able to provide global positive assurance as to the legality and regularity of the transactions concerned, it concludes. Fraud is involved. But the auditors also blame a mix of waste, mismanagement and sloppy controls or lax application of the rules by member states, particularly in the two biggest spending areas: regional or social grants and agriculture, which together account for 75 per cent of payments.

"What we are saying is that payments of the order of £3bn were dodgy. We are decidedly unhappy about the handling of those sums. If the auditor of a private company entered this reservation in the annual accounts, there would be uproar among the shareholders," one senior court official said yesterday. The harsh judgment appears to give British critics a further stick with which to beat the Brussels bureaucracy. But the report is more an indictment of national administrations. The auditors found that 90 per cent of the errors relating to payments were in member states, not in Brussels. Frequently, it was at the level of local or regional organisations who were found to be dishing out cash to schemes which were ineligible for funding.

Muslims' return to their village triggers gunfight



Farmers were given money for setting aside non-existent fields or for owning herds of non-existent cows or sheep. Even £3m from a fund to help governments combat farm fraud went missing because of lax controls, the auditors say. Denmark paid out £12m in EU subsidies to exporters of cheese to Iran who were not entitled to claim it. The notorious olive oil regime which benefits Italy, Spain, Greece, France and Portugal is once again cited for its total absence of reliable controls.

The auditors are scathing about the operation of the EU's vast social fund which has disbursed £22bn since 1993: it requires an urgent overhaul, the auditors say. In Greece, a state body received subsidies for a retraining scheme for the unemployed. The money was spent on training civil servants who could not legally be dismissed.

Regional funding also fell victim to a number of schemes: a rural tourism scheme in Spain involved the spending of £200,000 on the renovation of a building. The auditors discovered that the building was in fact a weekend retreat for someone who was not even a local resident. Another scheme in Spain involved the fitting out of a building for the breeding of partridges and rabbits to develop hunting in the area. The investigators found that £30,000 had been spent on refurbishing apartments for people running the project.

The Court of Auditors is obliged to deliver a "statement of assurance" on the annual accounts under new rules written into the Maastricht Treaty.

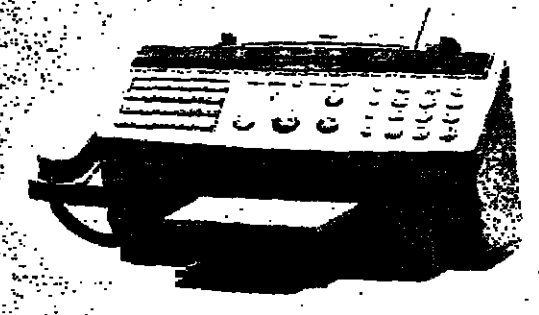
led government forces trading gunfire. West of Tuzla, near Kijuc, government experts have unearthed 244 corpses from one of Bosnia's

biggest mass graves. The bodies of Muslim civilians killed by rebel Serbs were found in a cave last month.

Photograph: Almir Amaut/Reuter

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international

George's easy credit drives French government crazy

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

France's first branch of Crazy George's, the British-owned furniture and domestic appliance chain, has had to close after only two days of trading amid a storm of political criticism over its sales methods. The store, which targets customers on low incomes and offers easy but expensive credit, opened last

Saturday in Bobigny, a poor suburb to the east of Paris.

After a swoop by trading standards officers last Sunday, the Economy Ministry announced that the store would close for an indefinite period. The ministry made it clear that the store had not been barred from trading, merely "advised" to improve the labelling of its prices.

A spokesman for the store said it would alter the labels to

comply with all official requirements. The particular complaint was that the small weekly repayment sum appeared on the label in big figures, with the retail price in smaller figures and the total credit cost, which could be twice or three times the retail price, even smaller underneath.

Crazy George's specialises in giving credit on household goods to people who might otherwise be unable to afford them, including those on low pay or benefit. It offers a form of hire purchase, under which the customer makes small weekly or monthly repayments over a protracted period. The purchase remains the property of the company for the duration of the loan and may be returned (by the customer), or taken back (by the store) for default.

The difficulty, seized on by French politicians across the political spectrum, is that the repayment schedule may make the goods two or even three times more expensive than if bought outright. Examples included a washing machine for Fr46 a week (£5.50), retail price Fr3,170 (£377), credit price Fr7,176 (£854).

In Britain, where there are already more than 50 such stores and hire purchase is common, this passed almost unremarked. In France, however, where medium-term credit is less common and less respectable, the terms at Crazy George's were deemed as socially unjust and immoral.

Just how much of an issue the store had become can be gauged from the standing of its critics. The leader of the Socialist Party, Lionel Jospin, spoke of the "scandal of shops for the poor where they have to pay twice

what the rich pay". The right-of-centre Economy Minister, Jean Arthuis, said it "passed the bounds of decency". A Gaullist minister, Eric Raoult, said it would marginalise the poor into particular shops and make their poverty permanent.

German austerity threatens fighter jet

Imre Karacs
Bonn

German penny is endangering Europe's largest joint arms project - the construction of a new generation of multi-purpose combat aircraft in Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain.

It was revealed yesterday that the Bonn Defence Ministry, which has just lost DM200m (£30.6m) from its budget, has no funds set aside for placing a firm order for the aircraft next year, when preparations for production are to begin. Britain and Spain are already committed to Eurofighter, but Germany has yet to confirm that it wants to buy 180 of the single-seat twin-engine jets.

Finances are tight, a Defence Ministry spokesman said yesterday. "We have no room for manoeuvre." Asked about the medium-term outlook, he stated: "We must wait and see". Alarmed by the prospect of a German about-turn, Britain's Prime Minister, John Major, last week wrote to Chancellor Helmut Kohl pleading for his support. But as Bonn slashes back its expenditure in an effort to qualify for monetary union, the other great European project is sliding down the list of priorities. An assurance by the Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, that Eurofighter would be funded was dismissed by the budgetary expert of one of the governing parties as an "April fool's joke".

Eurofighter was to replace the 40-year-old Phantom jets which saw Germany through the Cold War. With no obvious enemy in sight, however, even some members of the government are wavering in their fondness for what the opposi-

tion Social Democrats call an "expensive luxury".

Germany has invested DM6.5bn in research, and 40,000 jobs are estimated to depend on the project, mainly at Dasa, the aeronautics division of Daimler-Benz. According to the financial daily *Handelsblatt*, Dasa dropped its price last week from DM26bn to 23.3bn, but still came away empty handed.

The company also wanted the government to guarantee DM6.9bn leading up to the start of production in 2001, but again to no avail. Dasa, with a 30 per cent stake in the project, is the second largest constructor, after British Aerospace which holds 37.5 per cent. Altogether, 620 jets are to be built for the four nations.

At a time when even unemployment benefits are being cut, it is hard for the government to justify buying the aircraft. The Defence Ministry, the department hardest hit by this year's austerity budget, has more immediate problems. Tanks lie idle because there is no money for repairs, and the pennies are being scraped together for the Bundeswehr's first mission abroad - to Bosnia.

Germany is to decide later this month whether it can bankroll the project. Britain and the other partners are bracing themselves for the worst. "I am sure Eurofighter is not heading for the rocks," Britain's Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo, insisted yesterday, while conceding that delay was possible. "We would greatly regret a delay to Eurofighter, which would be damaging but not fatal," he said. Which is what the Germans have been saying all along.

Swans enjoy a short winter cruise



Olaf Niess, the Swan Father of Hamburg, with swans on Alster lake in the city. He and his helpers round them up each year to take them to winter quarters, and they are brought back in spring. Photograph: Michael Probst/AP

significant shorts

Russians say US breached spy etiquette

Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service said the US broke "unwritten rules" by giving an ex-spy a visa and arresting him when he arrived in America. It also offered to bail Vladimir Galkin, accused by the FBI of spying on the Star Wars defence system when he was a KGB agent. The Russians say Mr Galkin, arrested in New York last month, was entrapped, since the US knew of his espionage background when he was given a visa. AP - Moscow

Jews converge on Hebron

Jews protesting at a planned troop redeployment flocked to Hebron after a phone call by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, to Yasser Arafat failed to break the deadlock in talks on its future. Ultra-Orthodox Jews marched to the Tomb of the Patriarchs, sacred to Muslims and Jews. A spokesman said: "The people feel that this may be the last time they can visit Hebron." AP - Hebron

Lithuania old regime ousted

Lithuania's Conservatives, led by Vytautas Landsbergis, hero of 1991's independence struggle, routed the governing ex-Communists in a run-off poll. The Conservatives won 70 of the 137 seats; the ex-Communists got 12. AP - Vilnius

Pope ready to receive Castro

The Pope will receive Cuba's President Castro if he asks to meet during his visit to Rome this week for a UN food summit, the Vatican said. It would be their first meeting, and could lead to a papal trip to Cuba. AP - Rome

Malaysia expels more E Timor protesters

Malaysia deported the 10 remaining foreigners who came for a short-lived conference on East Timor at the weekend and freed from jail nine other human rights activists and two journalists. The conference, held before today's anniversary of the 1991 killing by Indonesian troops of 50 demonstrators in East Timor's capital, Dili, was broken up by protesters from a youth group allied to the Malaysian government. Thirty-six foreign activists were expelled on Sunday. Reuter - Kuala Lumpur

Neolithic treasure bust

Two Greeks were arrested after being found with a 5,000-year-old collection of 31 unique Neolithic clay figurines in their car. Police said they detained the two men during a highway patrol check along the country's main north-south highway. Archaeologists said 20 of the clay female figurines were intact and all are believed to have been stolen from digs in the Achaia region of the Peloponnese. AP - Athens

'Chatterley' to bare all in Japan

Japan, a nation where pornography is freely available, gets a chance later this month to read an uncensored version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* for the first time in 46 years. The Shinchosha publishing house said that a full Japanese translation of Lawrence's classic, including passages still officially banned, would be available on bookshelves on 30 November. In 1950 the Japanese Supreme Court found a complete Japanese translation of the author's book obscene and ordered about 80 pages of love scenes to be deleted. Reuter - Tokyo

Hell's Angels on murder charge

Jan Olsen
Associated Press

Four Hell's Angels members and two supporters listened motionless as charges were read yesterday in their trial for one of the most stunning murders in the Nordic biker war.

The six men are charged with murder in the shooting in March of Uffe Larsen, a member of the rival Bandidos motorcycle gang, at the international airport in Copenhagen. Three other Bandidos were wounded in the shooting and another in an attack the same day at Oslo airport in Norway.

Until the airport shootings, most of the attacks in the gang feud had taken

place at or near the bikers' rural clubhouses. But in the past eight months, attacks have increasingly burst out in heavily populated areas, raising fears that bystanders would be caught in the violence.

Those attacks have included a shooting outside the main post office in downtown Oslo and the anti-tank grenade attack last month on the Hell's Angels Copenhagen headquarters, in which two people were killed and 17 injured. At least nine people have died and 46 have been wounded in the three-year feud.

The murder trial is being held amid intense security. The six defendants were led into the Eastern High Court

by police carrying sub-machine guns and wearing bullet-proof jackets. No one with a criminal record was allowed into the courtroom and spectators, journalists and other observers were body-searched before entry.

The defendants, who cannot be named under a court order, had not seen each other since their arrests. They gave each other the characteristic bikers' hug as they met up in the courtroom. "You look great," one biker told another.

Heavily armed police officers surrounded the down-town court building while marksmen were spotted on nearby roofs. One street alongside the court was closed and parking around

the courthouse will be forbidden because of fear of car bombs.

Blue Dyrberg, for the prosecution, said the six men "plotted and conspired to kill". The killer of Mr Larsen has not been identified yet and the prosecution will try to convince the 12-man jury that the bikers should be sentenced as a group, not as individuals. If found guilty, the six face up to life in prison.

Sixty-nine people are scheduled to take the stand, including a non-biker considered the key witness. The witness tried to avoid making a court appearance because he was scared by threats from the Hell's Angels, but the Supreme Court ruled in September that he must testify.



An armed policeman outside the high court yesterday. Photograph: [unclear]

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Can't we leave schools to the local councils?

The Funding Agency for Schools is ready to launch a takeover bid – not for the world, but for the nation's schools, which is a good start. Gone would be any discretion for the much-maligned local education authorities. Forget local politicians interfering in school financial affairs. Head teachers would instead receive their money from on high. Local authorities would have little left to do. And if the Agency had its way, the cash would be allocated by a neat national funding formula with no account taken of local preferences. Citing the mess local management has made of some schools, and the variation in education funding across the country, supporters of a nationalised funding system can claim to be proposing a fairer and more rational approach all round.

But what would happen to local oversight of an inherently local service? Again, supporters of the funding agency approach would argue that roughly 90 per cent of the funding of schools is not at the local council's discretion anyway – it is entirely at the disposal of the governing body, and the head as the governors' chief executive. Parents, it is argued, can express their views direct to governors, many of whom also have children at the school. Local councils, by contrast, are not always responsive to angry parents, even when they threaten to vote them out.

But the fact is that local councillors, however unresponsive, are nearer to home than a national funding agency. If the local authority screws up or gets its priorities wrong, local voters know who to blame and who to complain to. And politicians, anxious about their vote at the next council election, have at least an incentive to listen. Anonymous national bureaucrats, tucked away in an office in London, have no reason to listen to parents at all – if parents can even work out who and where they are.

Gone, too, would be the scope for local prioritising. People who want to invest heavily in nursery education at the expense (for example) of local leisure facilities, will be denied that choice. At the moment some £700m is allocated by local education authorities to schools, over and above the minimum prescribed by government, because people in certain areas decide that that is how they want their money spent.

It is not only democracy that is at stake here. There is no necessary trade-off between local democracy and efficiency. Quite the reverse. A single funding formula for schools, which takes no account of local variations and peculiarities, will not work. In some regions, for example, the schools on the top of the hills may need more cash than those at the bottom – for heating and transport. How would national for-

mulae account for that?

A fair and efficient allocation of cash between schools will require an awful lot of local knowledge, not a simple national formula. To do it properly the national agency would have to leave its London sanctuary and move out into the communities that its decisions affect. In other words, it would have to replicate the functions that local councils perform, only in a much less accountable way.

Nor can decisions about funding be separated from thorny questions about welfare. Placing a difficult child who has been excluded from several schools

already will have implications for resources. So, too, will rescuing a failing school. These functions would require pooled local resources, under the auspices of one or another agency – when we already have local councils to carry out these roles.

Worst of all, depriving local authorities of the freedom to fund denies them the option of developing new initiatives. If we are to accelerate educational achievement, we need to inspire the whole community to take part.

Of course, we should not kid ourselves that local education authorities are the fount of goodness and excel-

lence. Far from it. Educational havoc was inflicted on Britain's schools in large measure by enthusiastic local education authority advisers: abolition of streaming, the destruction of competitive sport, the dominance of progressive teaching methods. These attitudes are changing, but they are changing slowly, and the best bulwark against backsliding is continuing pressure from parents on standards.

Consider, too, the mess that certain local authorities have made of the schools in their area. Calderdale local education authority failed to stop the complete collapse of discipline and morale in the Ridings school in Halifax. Meanwhile petty personality politics on Hackney Council left the children at Hackney Downs school in limbo while different factions bickered about whether to close it or not.

Nevertheless, bad management and bad decisions are not the prerogative of local institutions. National government is equally capable of making horrendous mistakes. At least if power is devolved to a local, democratic level, it is more accountable, and can tap into local experience too.

All this means that the true devolution of power is to schools and parents. But some matters – some aspects of the distribution of the cash, but also occasional emergency intervention – are best provided by a local authority whose staff understand the people and

the area. National government should set standards targets through tests. It should prescribe a core curriculum. It should ensure that the quality of trained teachers is satisfactory. And then it should leave local people to deliver in the way they see fit, intervening only if things go seriously wrong. Local democracy and local administration need reform and revival: if they are trampled into the dirt, we will all regret the loss.

A lesson for the golden boy

Golden-haired golden boy David Willetts got his wrist smacked yesterday for a memo proposing that the cash-for-questions inquiry be delayed by the Tory MPs on the members' interests committee. Tut, tut, Mr Willetts: manipulating parliamentary standards for party political gain isn't really on. His excuse? According to Tory MPs, the man is a little bit of exceeding large brain, who has little experience of such earthly matters, so we should forgive him his transgression. Hardly. Mr Willetts has learnt the hard way that, in politics at least, you are not supposed to commit all your splendid thoughts to paper. Otherwise your egg-head ends up with egg on its face.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blame UN for Dutch fiasco in Bosnia

Sir: I must take issue with Robert Fisk ("Dutch courage is a disgrace to the United Nations", 7 November) for criticism of Dutch UN peacekeepers in their failure to defend Srebrenica.

Just before the safe areas were created, five member states in the Security Council (Pakistan, Djibouti, Morocco, Venezuela and Cap Verde) wanted Muslim enclaves to be liberated by force. The five veto powers were against such an idea. It was May 1993, in the first months of the Clinton presidency, and although specialists in the State Department desperately urged him to act, the President would not get involved. But at the time, CNN television was focused on Bosnia, and eventually the decision to create safe areas was made by a council desperate for something to be done.

The procedure for the creation of safe areas is outlined in detail in the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The safety of such areas is dependent on demilitarisation, without which they are not safe. The conventions stipulate agreement from both sides, a timetable and inspection mechanisms and a full range of military resources. In Bosnia, the council ignored this.

When researching a book I interviewed Lt-Gen Lars-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden, who told me of a cable he sent to the Council before the safe areas resolution was passed, in which he pleaded that the policy be reconsidered. The areas, without being demilitarised or defended, would surely fall. Even with the necessary agreements on the ground, the safe areas would need an extra 34,000 troops.

The Wahlgren cable was ignored and the Security Council approved the resolution. Other commanders thought the idea was folly – the safe areas would never be viable. They were right. The blue helmets found it hard to keep their own lives open, let alone protect people under siege.

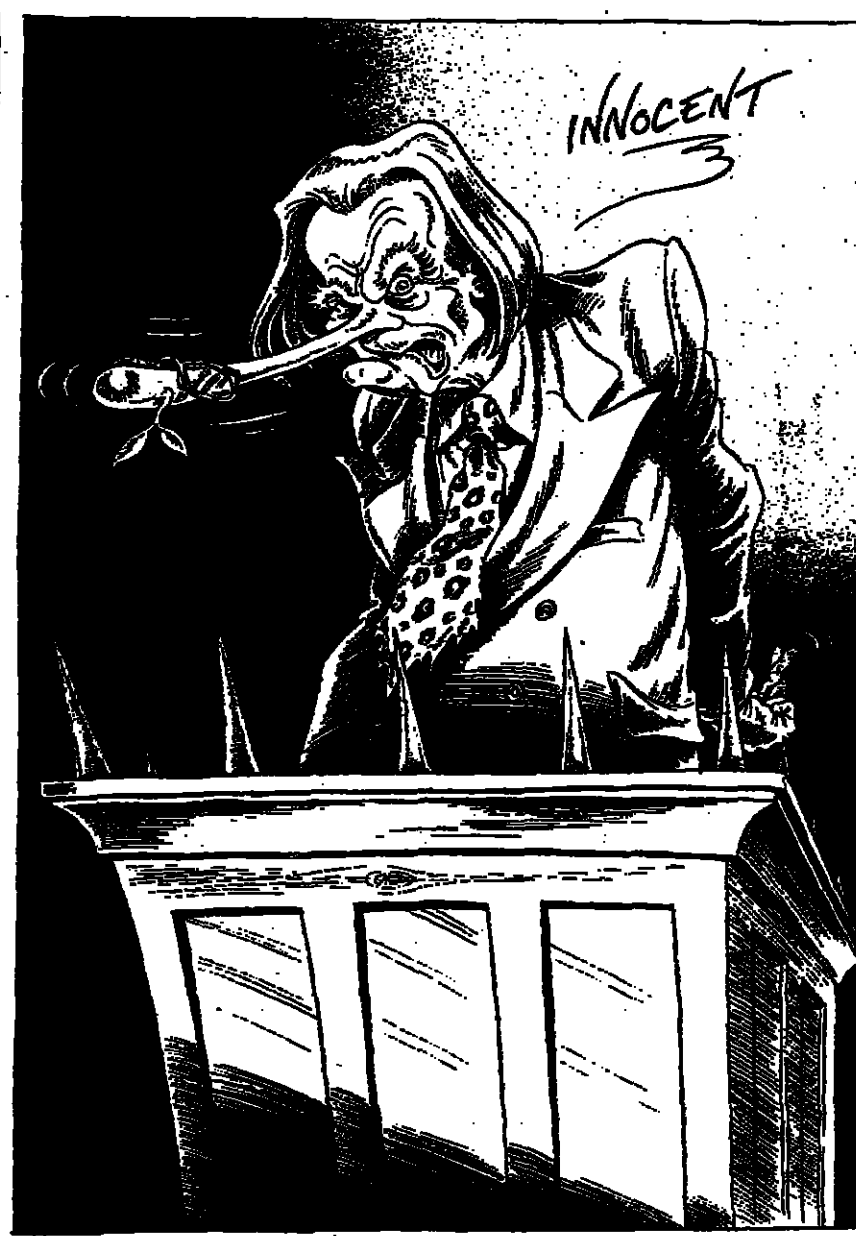
The resolution on safe areas was approved before their perimeters, troop numbers, rules of engagement, the precise role of Nato and close air support were agreed. In the hours leading up to the fall of Srebrenica, there were 1,500 Serbs approaching with rocket launchers and tanks. There were 400 Dutch peacekeepers, who were running out of ammunition and marooned between the two sides. They had no artillery and little fuel for their armoured personnel carriers.

The stories of the three great tragedies of Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda have somehow become divorced from the decisions taken in the Security Council – decisions which have made a decisive difference for millions of people. The mistakes made in the council have been too quickly disregarded.

To blame peacekeepers for civilian casualties shows a disregard for the integrity of the historical record. The focus should be on the Council and an increased scrutiny of Britain's role within it.

At the end of the article, Fisk asks: "Aren't soldiers occasionally expected to fight, even to die?" The answer apparently is no, not for UN peacekeeping. We are told that one of the lessons of Somalia is that public opinion will not allow it. Peace is not worth the lives of peacekeepers.

LINDA MELVERN
London N16



UK is sweatshop of Europe

Sir: The European Commission's Cohesion Report painted a devastating picture of the UK's economy ("EU says Britons fall into poverty faster", 7 November). The report's poverty figures are already out of date.

More recent figures, newly available to the Commission, indicate that as many as 25 per cent of British households live under the poverty line, lifting the UK to equal first in the EU poverty league alongside Portugal.

However, your report failed to highlight the fact that while UK growth has been employment-intensive, other countries have had a faster growth rate. In the UK today workers work longer hours for lower pay and they do so less productively than their European counterparts – a further indication that the UK is the sweatshop of Europe.

The Conservative government's privatisation programme and its insistence on pushing forward its deregulation agenda at every turn has increased the disparities between both regions and social groups.

The report confirms what many of us have known for some time – that social cohesion is breaking down in the UK – and cites the UK as an example of a dual economy. It singles out several of the UK's old industrial regions as examples of zero or negative employment growth – namely the West Midlands, Merseyside and South Yorkshire.

Labour's proposals for a decentralised regional policy will at

last start to close the gaps and use EU funding more effectively to build economic and social cohesion both within and between regions of the UK.

ARLENE MCCARTHY MEP
(Peak District, Lab)
Glossop, Derbyshire

Yard denies issue of Stagg photo

Sir: Your article "Deeply suspect" (November 5), is misleading.

At no stage did Scotland Yard issue a photograph of Colin Stagg. It is not the police who determine "cause of death". It is the pathologist acting for the coroner following a post-mortem examination. In the case of Wayne Douglas, the findings were that he died of a heart condition.

At no time following the shooting of IRA terrorist Diarmuid O'Neill did we imply that there had been a "shoot-out". In fact, we cautioned the media against using such terms and our own early statement said "shots fired during the morning's operation were fired by police".

Your own journalists make full use of our expensive, over-stretched 24-hour press bureau service, and I find it extraordinary that you are so critical of it. My press officers would certainly welcome fewer calls.

SARAH CULLUM
Director of Public Affairs
Metropolitan Police
London SW1

Sir: It is unacceptable for Paul Donovan ("Deeply Suspect", 5 November) to claim that BBC's *Crimewatch UK* can "perpetrate injustice" on the strength of the subjective opinion of a fellow journalist.

Crimewatch UK goes to great lengths to ensure accuracy when reproducing known events for its reconstructions. All information phoned in to the programme, of whatever status, is passed on to the relevant police investigation team, and is then carefully sifted before any action is taken.

SEETHA KUMAR
Series producer, "Crimewatch UK"
BBC
London W12

Offshore future for wind turbines

Sir: The debate about wind power is never a dull one. John Etherington (letter, 6 November) is concerned about British uplands being covered in wind turbines.

The technology for wind turbines is moving very quickly at present and more powerful turbines are coming on to the market with no increase in height. From the early years of the next century it is predicted that an increasing proportion of developments would be offshore.

In independent surveys over the past five years, the public consistently comes out in favour of wind power, with an average support rate of 70-85 per cent. Where surveys have been carried

out before and after a wind farm has been built, local community support for the scheme often increases.

Mr Etherington and myself agree on one thing – that a thorough energy efficiency programme could dramatically cut CO₂ emissions. But energy efficiency is only one side of the equation. We still need to find non-polluting ways to generate electricity in the first place.

TRICIA ALLEN
Friends of the Earth
London N1

Fisher's plan to breach the Baltic

Sir: Your article of 6 November relates how Churchill planned to buy up battleships with air bags to get them into the Baltic. Churchill was recycling the "Baltic Project" inherited from the previous war.

Admiral Fisher, first Sea Lord up to 1915, when Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty, dreamed up special heavy ships with shallow draught to get into the Baltic to intercept shipping, seize islands and attack Germany's northern coast. His ideas, unlike Churchill's, actually became hardware, though it was not used for its original purpose.

In 1915 Fisher's three extraordinary ships were laid down: *Glorious*, *Furious* and *Courageous*, inevitably nicknamed *Curious*, *Spurious* and *Outrageous*. Each had half a battleship's armament,

unprecedented speed (33 knots), armour unworthy of a light cruiser and draught shallow enough (25 feet) to penetrate the Baltic safely without the benefit of balloons.

The abandonment of the Baltic Project left them with attitude but no role. After odd experiments they were rebuilt as aircraft carriers, in which capacity they were able to carry more aircraft (52) than any RN carrier until the *Ark Royal* of 1938. Two were lost early in the Second World War, but *Furious*, which had launched an air strike against Zeppelin sheds in 1918, survived to attack the *Tirpitz* in 1944.

An all-wise government has finally solved this problem by reducing the Navy to such a limited collection of relatively small ships that today none would find any difficulty in getting into the Baltic.

DAVID COLEMAN
Oxford

Vichy in Quebec

Sir: Commenting on the Roux affair (7 November), you write that during the Second World War II "some members of Quebec's francophone majority initially (my italics) were more sympathetic to the collaborationist Vichy regime in France than to the Allies".

I worked for a month in Montreal in September 1951. One of the best-sellers that autumn, prominently displayed in every francophone bookshop, was entitled *Pétain avait raison* – and it had nothing to do with his achievements in World War I.

LORD MONSON
House of Lords
London SW1

Tag of honour for tearaways

Sir: Your report on the Government's plans to extend electronic monitoring to juvenile offenders ("Electronic tags for children", 9 November) looks like another penal policy fiasco in the making.

Following the failure of experiments in their use with adult offenders, what possible grounds are there for applying these gizmos to those you term "teenage tearaways who vandalise and terrorise communities"? If anything, the tag will become a badge of honour.

It is true that in Sweden – the only other European country to have imported the technology from America – tagging has encountered far fewer problems than has been the case in Britain. This is principally because the Swedes regard the tag as a back-up to social work intervention, not as the be-all and end-all.

STEPHEN SHAW
Director
Prison Reform Trust
London EC1

Sir: The Government's plan to place young offenders under electronic monitoring is one of the worst ideas yet to tackle youth crime. Tagging is a negative and stigmatising measure which is particularly unsuitable for juveniles.

These young people will have to attend school with a tag attached to their wrist or ankle branding them an offender. Some children will undoubtedly boast about their tag and adopt a "hard" image to live up to it. This is exactly the opposite of the attitudes towards which we are trying to steer juvenile offenders.

The resources should be devoted to strengthening constructive options such as bail support programmes and intensive supervision schemes.

PAUL CAVADINO
Chair, Penal Affairs Consortium
London SW9

Life, the Universe and clever newts

Sir: I am not surprised to see your news that the number 42 is a key to understanding the universe (8 November). That finally explains why the world is at sixes and sevens and every problem is multiplying.

TOM TICKELL
London N19

Sir: As for any other physical constant, the value of the Hubble constant depends on the units in which it is measured and astronomers, for convenience, use kilometres per second per megaparsec. That is not a standard unit and it even contains an anthropomorphic element in that a parsec refers to the size of the earth's orbit around the sun.

Therefore, to marvel at the significance of the number 42 for the value of the Hubble constant is nothing but numerology.

Dr WERNER WEIGHLOFER
Department of Mathematics
University of Glasgow

Sir: The answer to "Why is the answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything the number 42?" is to be found in the old classic *War with the Newts*, by the Czech writer Karl Capek. The first calculation carried out by an intelligent newt is – surprise, surprise – $6 \times 7 = 42$.

BRUCE JACKSON
Preston, Lancashire

analysis

Britain is feeling good again...

Champagne sales are bubbling, house prices are rising, all's right with the Chancellor's world. But will he reap the rewards, asks Diane Coyle

Nobody wants to describe what is happening to the economy as a boom. As we know too well, boom leads to bust, and neither the Government nor businesses want the next recession to cast its shadow before the last one has faded from memory. They would argue that Britain has gone beyond the ups and downs of the economic cycle to the promised land of steady, sustainable growth.

So champagne sales are well up. House price increases in some parts of the country have reached double digits. Multi-media computers, the late Nineties equivalent of the mobile phone, are walking off the shelves. Sales of women's designer clothes are surging – even in Leeds, thanks to Harvey Nichols. But so far, this is just an encouraging recovery.

The economic news could scarcely be better for the Conservatives. Consumer confidence, the all-important indicator of how voters are feeling about the Government's handling of the economy, is at its highest level since 1988. Just as important, the housing market has recovered and is releasing hundreds of thousands of homeowners from negative equity.

Only six months ago Kenneth's predictions of a recovery in the second half of the year looked like a figment of his cheery imagination. Then tax cuts coming into effect in April delivered the biggest one-off boost to spending power since Nigel Lawson's Budget in the pre-election year of 1986. Although the pundits described it at the time as a modest give-away, the Clarke tax cuts of £3bn were bigger, adjusted for inflation, than the Lawson ones.

Combined with a series of reductions in interest rates starting last December that have taken the cost of a mortgage to the lowest level for nearly 30 years, the Chancellor successfully kick-started the recovery. At the same time, falling unemployment has taken earnings growth up from

3 per cent a year ago to 4 per cent now. Thanks to lower taxes, lower mortgage payments and increased earnings during the past 12 months, a dual-income couple on average earnings with a typical mortgage now has about £200 a month in extra spending power.

The housing market is where the effects have been most dramatic. House prices were flat until the spring but in the space of six months house price inflation has climbed above 7 per cent. Sales of goods related to housing – furniture, carpets, DIY materials, consumer electronics – have risen substantially.

Higher spending power is spreading beyond these homely goods, however. Some of the classic signs of late-1980s froth have returned to the economy. For example, monthly shipments of champagne have climbed above 10 million bottles, a 22 per cent increase on a year earlier. Sales of antiques at the Peter Jones store in Sloane Square have been "very substantial". Spending on eating out is growing at a rate of 30 per cent a year.

Retail specialist Meg Abdy at the Henley Centre says there is general evidence of stronger sales of luxury goods. "The 'sod-it' factor is creeping in. People are a bit more flush with cash and can't keep up the austerity any longer," she argues. Barry Turnbull, city centre manager for Newcastle agrees. "There are no bad weeks at the moment. People are spending freely," he says.

It is hard to see any reason why this momentum should evaporate, despite the straw in the wind of a quarter point rise in base rates a fortnight ago. Pay rises are accelerating as the number of jobless continues to fall – the official total is likely to get below 2 million by the end of the year. Competition between lenders will keep mortgage costs low for some time.

More significant will be the free shares given away by building societies joining the stockmarket in 1997. The value of the handout is put at £20bn. Even if

the recipients spend only a fifth of their windfall, it will increase consumer spending by 1 per cent, enough to take the economy beyond sustainable growth.

Yet many retailers are keen to stress that we are not revisiting the errors of the 1980s. According to Andrew Higginson, chairman of the British Retail Consortium's economic affairs committee and finance director of the Burton Group, reports of a boom are irresponsible. "Obviously, you cannot say it will never creep back, but the Chancellor has already raised interest rates to counter a mythical danger," he says.

The same fear, of another increase in borrowing costs that would force them to raise mortgage rates, is making the building societies talk down the danger of an unsustainable housing boom, even though some economists predict house price inflation above 10 per cent next year.

This is a wonderful dilemma for Mr Clarke. Either there is a steady recovery which requires him to do precisely nothing to deliver strong growth in consumer spending between now and May. Or there is a boom, and he can nudge up interest rates to look cautious while reaping any electoral benefits of the feel-good factor. Many experts do not think we will see a re-run of the late 1980s. David Miles, professor of economics at Imperial College, London, says one reason is that further tax cuts are off the agenda, both before and after the election. "We are looking at much more deep-seated fiscal problems than anyone perceived a decade ago," he says.

Others remain sceptical about both the Government's management of the economy and the credit they will get for it. According to Professor Charles Bean of the London School of Economics: "It is difficult to mismanage an upturn from a deep recession, and my hunch is the electorate will think the economy has turned out well despite the Government. The real proof will be how well they manage the boom."



Consumer confidence: shoppers in Gateshead yesterday

...but what about the politicians?

Labour is in a dilemma: how do they accept the boom without praising the Tories? Donald Macintyre has some advice

John Major could scarcely have delivered a more upbeat message to the City in his Guildhall speech last night: 1997 would see the "most secure economic base for generations ...". Britain was "back in the first rank". There was a clear sub-text here: the feel-good factor is back, and with it the prospects of a Tory victory next year. What's more, a lot of the hard figures back up his optimism. So how worried should Labour be that its commanding lead is about to slip away?

On one analysis, not much. The polls show an unprecedented disjunction between economic optimism among the electorate and its willingness to vote Tory. In the past, as economic prospects improved, people became more supportive of the government. That relationship has broken down. Last month's MORI poll for *The Times* showed that the so-called economic optimism index had fallen from 10 per cent to only -1 per cent since the first half of the year. Yet the same poll still gave Labour an awe-inspiring 28-point lead.

This has been worrying the Tories for months, and is usually attributed to the last blow to Tory credibility suffered when Major was ignominiously forced out of ERM in 1992. But it may also simply be that, having repeatedly told the voters that the recession was caused by international factors entirely beyond their control, ministers are now having a hard time persuading the same public that the recovery, by contrast, is all because of the brilliance of the Government.

Second, Labour is much less vulnerable to the charge that it would ruin an economic recovery through high taxes than it was before the 1992 election. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have been zealous in shedding Labour's tax-and-spend baggage. And as part of its softening-up process for the Budget, Labour will this week start reminding the voters again how far taxes have gone up, before Clarke starts to implement them down again.

Finally, there is a heretical but, to some, seductive argument that electors are more likely to vote Labour in an economic recovery than in a recession. In the Labour post-mortem examination after its 1992 defeat, some of the then Shadow Chancellor John Smith's aides argued that voters are more comfortable voting for redistribution when the country can afford it. This was rejected by Brown and Blair – and by John Smith, when he became Labour leader – as a distraction from what they, by contrast, saw as the central lesson of the 1992 defeat: the part played in it by Labour's tax and spending commitments.

Labour need not panic over the prospects of a steadily improving economy

between now and polling day. But that doesn't mean that it can be complacent, either. First, it can't be quite sure that the ERM débacle is the only reason the Tories aren't reaping the benefit of economic optimism. It may be, as Michael Dicks of Leaman Brothers argued last month, as much to do with negative equity. You can't reverse the 1992 devaluation. But a housing mini-boom could unlock negative equity, and with it some more Tory votes.

Labour also knows that the markets will allow the Tories somewhat more fiscal "irresponsibility" than they would a Labour government. This poses a dilemma for Labour: Blair and Brown are genuinely sceptical about how real are the spending cuts Clarke will announce; they have already spent a lot of time pointing out that public borrowing has doubled since John Major came to power; they worry that privatisation receipts – for example of housing association debt or MOD homes – are one-offs for which the next government will have to pay a price.

But criticising the Government for conducting an irresponsible "scorched earth" policy can be dangerous, and not only because it sounds Eeyore-ish, just when everyone is feeling better. For what are they supposed to say they would do instead? Produce deeper cuts in spending? Hardly an electoral rallying cry. Raise more taxes? Unthinkable for new Labour. What's more, the more they attack the Government for mismanaging the economy now, the more they may be building up trouble for themselves if they win. As Harold Wilson found in 1964, the worse you say things are before an election, the more the markets expect you take drastic and unpleasant action when you get in.

So Labour has to play it cool. Ideally, perhaps, Labour would prefer an election now, before the feel-good factor has any more chance to play into the polls. But that isn't going to happen. Labour will not get drawn into playing alternative budgets with Ken Clarke. It will continue to attack the Tories for Britain's long-term failure to invest. And it will continue to implement Tony Blair's latest exhortation to his colleagues: the "three Rs" are reminding voters of the pain they have suffered under the Tories in the past; reassuring them that Labour is not going back to its old ways (as Brown did his best to do yesterday on inflation); and rewarding them with the promise of a better quality of life.

It may be that the link between economic optimism and Tory support has irrevocably broken down for the Government, however shrewd a budget Ken Clarke produces. It's a worry that still haunts the Tories. But if it hasn't, there are no quick fixes; there's no turning back from the strategy already set by Brown and Blair.

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Right answers to the wrong questions



Miles
Kingston

Today I have great pleasure in handing over our regular advice column to the well-known New Age philosopher, Jeremy Hurstpierpoint Jones, who knows more about the mysteries of the world than I shall ever do. All yours, Jeremy!

I am intrigued by the way in which people now write to the newspapers for answers to questions. The great example of this is the feature in "The Guardian" called Odds and Sods, or Notes and Queries, or something like that, where one reader writes in to ask

"Why are motorways marked in blue on maps and not some other colour?" and another reader writes in with the solution or, as is typically the case with "Guardian" readers, lots of people write in with lots of different solutions, none of which is the right one. Why do readers do this? What makes them think that the newspapers will know the answer, especially as newspapers never get anything else quite right?

New Age philosopher Jeremy Hurstpierpoint Jones writes: There is nothing new about this. People have always written into newspapers with queries. In the old days "The Daily Mirror" had a page run by the Old Codgers which answered extremely factual questions such as "Is it true that Vera Lynn was so precious to the war effort that she was never sent to the front but had several doubles who went abroad and sang instead of her to the troops?" It is only the nature of the questions which has changed. All nature is composed of questions and answers, which ebb and flow in a

mystical way through our consciousness. All unhappiness comes from asking the wrong questions. You see, when Hitler asked the question, "Wouldn't it be fun to invade France, so that we can all get into the Louvre without paying?", it was not a good question to ask. However...

Next question, please – Ed
Why do some insects such as bees and wasps often hover so close to people when they must know they are courting danger? Do they actually feel drawn to human company?

Jeremy Hurstpierpoint Jones writes: Yes. If you remember the principles of reincarnation, it stands to reason that many such insects are in fact people reborn as wasps or gnats, and by hovering close to you are saying an atavistic "Hello there!" It may also be that they do not enjoy their new existence as wasps or bees and are hoping to be swatted dead by you, thus giving them the entrée to a new existence.

Why are so many places in Britain situated on the edges of maps?
Jeremy H Jones writes:

Some people do believe that there is a series of mystical lines radiating throughout the ancient British world, passing through a series of places which never appear in the middle of any map, only on the edge. Bradford-on-Avon is a good example, depending on which map you use. The thing about these places is that as they are on the edge of one map, they are also on the edge of the next map. And if the place is in the corner of a map, it is also on the corner of three other maps. And this raises the question, if a place is on the edge of three other maps, might it not be also on the edge of ANOTHER map that we don't know about? In another geographical world?

What does that mean?
J H Jones writes: How do you mean, "mean"?

What are your feelings about wind farms?
J Jones writes: I think they are a capitalist plot to steal the soul from our winds. To help combat this, I am currently building a wind chime farm on my fields which will do nothing but

tinkle unprofitably and thus restore the missing energy to the air.

Well, why ARE motorways marked in blue on maps and not some other colour?

Jones writes: You are, like Hitler, asking the wrong questions. If you open your eyes and look at road maps from mainland Europe, you will see that motorways are generally marked with a double red and yellow line. It is only in Britain we colour motorways blue. And that is because we do not have any big rivers.

Pardon?
I writes: If motorways were coloured blue on continental maps, they would be hard to distinguish from such big rivers as the Seine, Rhône and Rhine. We have much smaller – and more wriggly – rivers, hard to confuse on a map with a motorway, which is why nobody ever tries to drive down the Severn.

Would YOU like some alternative answers to your straight questions? Drop a line to Jeremy Hurstpierpoint Jones, or just beam it along by Thinkmail.

How I would free drivers from gridlock

We have gridlock. The rush hour begins just after 6am and is still in full flow three hours later. In many parts of the south east the traffic queue for one junction runs into the queue for the next and for the one beyond that. The station car park is full. The queue for Heathrow is long. The M25 regularly seizes up. Everyone tells me something should be done about it.

The authorities are far from idle. The more traffic that herds on to the road, the more barriers to its movement they impose. The slower the traffic flows, the tighter the speed controls are. Many a Lib-Lab county or borough has gone mad, spending a fortune on bollards, chicanes, red road surfaces, traffic lights and speed cameras. We now regularly enjoy radar traps to supplement the speed cameras, and police cars to supervise the jams.

The latest theory is that we will overcome the crisis by shifting people from car to bus and train. Berkshire County has solved the problem by writing a consultation document telling us all to get out of our cars and on to the bus. All of this has been thought up by a county that offers free parking places to its employees, 91 per cent of whom drive to work. When I asked them to explain why they do not practise what they preach, I was told that their jobs needed the flexibility of the motor car. Precisely! And so do many others need that flexibility.

What could the counties and boroughs of Britain do to make the situation better? They are not powerless. First they should stop cluttering up the main routes with unnecessary ironmongery and technology. Taking what little road space we do have out of circulation or deliberately slowing traffic too much makes the problem worse. It even increases the emissions to the atmosphere, as lorries and cars sit with engines running, waiting for the obstruction to clear. One man's traffic calming is another man's road rage.

They could start to solve some of the underlying transport problem. The traffic chaos is worst in term-time, when parents are delivering children to schools. Secondary school pupils should usually be expected to go to school themselves. They should be encouraged to cycle, walk or go by bus. Counties should ensure that, if there are not proper general service buses, there are school buses to do the job.

For primaries, counties should look at organising minibuses to pick up from main housing areas. More parents would pay for this service if the driver was responsible for seeing the child safely into school. As one of the largest employers in each area, the county or borough should organise employee



John Redwood

Councils have gone mad: spending on bollards, chicanes, speed cameras – the more they do, the slower the traffic

buses for all their staff who would like to be spared the hassle and cost of a car journey. It would be an example for the other large employers to consider, if it worked well. Transport authorities and central government should plan the road works sensibly. A few weeks ago, for anyone coming in from the west of London, there were road works on the M4, M3, A30 and A40 all at the same time. Blocking one lane on any of these roads is restriction enough. To impede four inbound lanes from the west causes seizure. More money should be spent to mend the M3, before spending money on the M4, and after that on the A40 or A30.

The main A roads, especially the main routes into London, should be freed of any traffic management impediments. There should be a uniform sensible speed limit – 60mph for dual carriageways and 40mph for single carriageways. At the moment the driver has to be constantly decelerating and accelerating – if the road is clear – from 70mph to 60 to 40 to 30 to 40 to 30. With cameras these speed restrictions are becoming dangerous in themselves, causing sudden braking and bunching. Parking restrictions on radials into London should be firmly enforced by towing offenders away promptly and fining them heavily. Red routes should be universal on A-road radials to keep the

traffic flowing. People would use trains more if services were frequent and reliable, and if car parks are easy to use and safe. All too often people using the car park for day train trips find the car smashed up on return because no security system is in place. There need to be cameras or a guard for the car park. The new train companies seem keener on promoting train travel than BR used to be. If they can run frequent and reliable services more of us will use them more of the time. Oxford has shown how popular park and ride bus services can be – to the point where they now have a pollution problem from the diesel buses.

The authorities are getting in the way of a solution. Throwing more cameras, chicanes, humps and bus lanes into the battle will make things worse. They should spend less money and spend it better. Mend one road at a time. Create park-and-ride car parks for buses and trains. Clear through routes of clutter. Allow more houses and shops in or near town centres. Put more information about jams and freer routes on the gantries above the motorways. These are the practical measures which could stop the gridlock spreading.

The writer is MP for Wokingham and was Secretary of State for Wales from 1993 to 1995.

Problems with the touchy-feely stuff

by Jack O'Sullivan

The death of Marjorie Proops has provoked a flurry of speculation: who will succeed her as the most celebrated and prolific agony aunt?

Will the warm and cuddly Claire Rayner be lured to the throne in Canary Wharf? Could the terse, provocative Anna Rumbold be tempted away from Mohammed Al Fayed's new Liberty radio station. Or will a new pretender take the crown that Marje defended so fiercely?

The role of agony aunt is up for examination. What makes a good one? There is a joke among the top practitioners that the key qualification is to be a Jewish mama. "Maybe Jews have been so good at it, because we have such an intense intellectual curiosity," says Claire Rayner. "Our history of persecution means we know that all we have is each other and we also have the capacity to find humour in the most appalling circumstances." For Irma Kurtz of *Cosmopolitan*, Jewishness has encouraged portable skills, most importantly "common sense", which an agony aunt needs in huge quantities.

The demands of the job, she says, remain constant. "The basis of all the agony I get is a low self-esteem, a failure to feel one's own beauty and power. That is the core of it – not being sure of one's self."

There is a new group whose self-esteem is sinking fast: Men. Are today's agony aunts up to the job of helping men, who as a result of rapid social change have more and more problems? This is particularly important when replacing Marje. Because you can be quite sure there is one question no one is asking: what about hiring a bloke? The reason? Newspaper editors are solid, almost to a man, in seeing the touchy-feely stuff of agony columns as being the exclusive preserve of women.

Philip Hodson, a highly-regarded member of Britain's small circle of "agony uncles", has personal experience of this prejudice. His first foray as a national newspaper advice columnist was on the *Daily Star*. The arrival of a new editor, Lloyd Turner, produced a short meeting. "From tomorrow morning, your column is being written by Diana Dors." Next, he was offered the agony column on the *Sunday Mirror* by the *Evening Post*. "It was vetoed by Robert Maxwell, who said I didn't have a big enough bust," says Hodson. On the third occasion, another female editor, Patsy Chapman, then editor of the *News of the World*, installed



Who has got what it takes to replace Marje Proops as queen of the agony aunts? One thing's for sure, her successor is unlikely to be male

him in the agony slot. Two and half years later, a male editor, Piers Morgan, replaced her, and, surprise surprise, Hodson was given the chop. Today, he writes his column for *Family Circle*, the women's magazine. "As a rule," says Hodson, "my experience of most male newspaper editors is that they are very sexist. They believe that men should be out doing the war stories. They are also homophobic. They are disturbed by any feminine aspect coming out in a male columnist, which, after all, you have to bring out if you are going to deal with emotional problems."

"In the end, they will change, because they're not stupid. They will see there is a market for it. Looking at the future, it is clear that men will probably have more emotional problems than women in the home and in the workplace. But they will be difficult to deal with because

part of masculinity is the belief that men can cope. An outlet is needed for these problems. An agony uncle can offer a role model, a person who knows what it feels like to be a man."

go straight to the gut, the heart or the sex organ, depending on what the problem is."

Claire Rayner agrees. "Both men and women prefer generally to talk to a woman. It's probably because most adults today have been raised by a woman and so they feel more comfortable telling a woman about difficult issues."

Deirdre Sanders, *The Sun's* agony aunt, says there is no reason why agony uncles shouldn't do well. "But when newspapers have tried them, they have found a whole range of family problems that readers had which they didn't want to raise with a man. The posting tended to fill up with men writing to another man about sexual problems."

But teenage magazines are already demonstrating that there is a gap in the market. Men are needed to get certain problems out into the open and magazines have appointed agony uncles. The girls write in to find out what's going on in their boyfriends' heads. This week in *More*, the advice columnist Tony offers some robust advice to Janey who is worried what her boyfriend makes of the "farting" noise, when she's on top: "It should take more than an embarrassing noise to make any lad worth his salt bolt for the door... After all, 'bloopers' aren't exactly silent movers when it comes to farting, are they?" He also replies to a teenager worried that her boyfriend has never said he loves her. "It's a bloke thing," says Tony. "Try to find comfort in the fact that your boyfriend is not alone in the trouble he is getting the 'L' word from his brain to his mouth."

Nick Fisher on *Just Seventeen* works alongside a female colleague who also writes a column. This week he helps out a reader who complains that "my willy is a class joke", after he unzipped to flaunt his tackle to his friends. "Of course," reassures Fisher, "your mates will tell girls how teeny it is, because it makes them feel safe that you're the object of ridicule and not them."

Fisher says, "There is a very good case for newspapers to have both an agony aunt and an agony uncle. I'm not knocking Marje, but if I was a twenty-something bloke, then I would feel that she was very far removed from my experience and I would wonder if she could tell me anything about my life."

So which newspaper is going to taking the plunge and trust a man with the touchy-feely stuff? After all, the first agony columnist wasn't a woman. It was Daniel Defoe.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was never a saint

Whenever anyone dares to hint that Ken Saro-Wiwa was not a saint – as Richard North did in Friday's *Independent* – there are outraged responses from people who have no significant knowledge of Ogoniland or Saro-Wiwa's complex personality.

I totally understand why Ken's son – Ken Wiwa – reacts emotionally to any remarks that tarnish his father's image. But everyone else should be able to stand back and calmly listen to criticisms of the man.

I'm an Ogoni myself. My father is a businessman and politician. He has been a minister for trade/industry. He was also a state chairman of Nigeria's last democratic government, and a rebel Biafran ambassador in London in the 1960s when Saro-Wiwa was one of the minuscule number of Ogonis who were firm friends of the Nigerian federal military government.

The Nigerian military won the Biafran civil war. My father was sentenced to death in absentia and forced to live in exile in Britain. Unlike 99 per cent of Ogonis, Saro-Wiwa did well out of that civil war. When everyone else was broke, he was rolling in it.

But my father's differences with Saro-Wiwa were eventually forgiven and I grew up in the 1970s knowing and being encouraged to like Saro-Wiwa. It was easy to like him. He even bought me my first typewriter.

Saro-Wiwa had never been 100 per cent idealistic about anything. Read some of his earliest writings and you'll discover that he opposed those who supported the Biafran civil war mostly because he thought that secession was bad for one's career.

And if you could have tuned into some of his conversations with me in the late 1980s/early 1990s, you'd have discovered that he later changed his mind about secession and decided that it was a great vehicle for ambitious African politicians.

Saro-Wiwa told me that if I totally committed myself to his campaign, I would become dazzlingly famous and rich beyond my wildest dreams. He enjoyed listing all the "silly" white liberals who might backroll the Ogoni cause (which he had conveniently

ignored in the 1960s). He used to tell me, in fairly bitter tones, that while-saving white liberals didn't care about the Third World's "real" problems. "But environmental complaints will get to them," he would add.

And while politely exempting myself from Saro-Wiwa's self-aggrandising plans, I half-heartedly wished him well, knowing that he wasn't totally cynical and sure that Ogonis would benefit indirectly if he got famous and even richer.

I did not approve of the kangaroo court that sentenced Ken Saro-Wiwa; and I was horrified when he was judicially murdered by Nigeria's brutal military dictators. But whenever I'm asked to comment on Saro-Wiwa's crudite, swashbuckling life and truly tragic death, I feel obliged to say that, despite his good qualities and the fact that his aims were partly laudable, he was an awesomely efficient publicity-manipulator who had a dark, power-hungry, rabble-rousing side that led to the deaths of four Ogoni moderates. He was a risk-taker. And he lost the gamble.

When Saro-Wiwa started his environmental campaign, the Ogoni elite were divided between radicals like Saro-Wiwa who favoured the sabotaging of oil pipelines, and moderates like his brother-in-law, Chief Oragu, and my father who shared his basic aims but felt that guerrilla action would encourage the military to lash out.

Saro-Wiwa took exception to those who urged caution and, according to witnesses whom I've met, ordered the henchmen who surrounded him to take harsh action against them. My father narrowly escaped death at a public rally. Saro-Wiwa's brother-in-law and three other men were not so lucky.

They were butchered in broad daylight. Local villagers say they were killed by known members of Saro-Wiwa's private army. One chap who openly threatened to testify against Saro-Wiwa's thugs had a nail driven into his skull before Saro-Wiwa's trial.

Amnesty International, Greenpeace and other observers and commentators (including Wole Soyinka, the



Donu Kogbara grew up as a family friend of the Ogoni dissident hanged a year ago by the Nigerians. Here she sympathises with the man and his cause, but also tells of his pursuit of power and wealth, and how his politics led to the death of his moderate allies

Nigerian Nobel Prize-winner – a privileged Yoruba tribesman who knows nothing about Ogoniland) never properly investigated the claims against Saro-Wiwa. My view is that they found it hard to believe that a pipe-smoking intellectual with a brave and benevolent image could be indirectly responsible for such savagery. Furthermore, the Nigerian regime is so dreadful that any action it takes is quite rightly regarded with suspicion. The fact remains that Saro-Wiwa was not the totally blameless gentleman he is widely believed to be.

Since I first spoke out against Saro-Wiwa in 1995, my media career has suffered. Even when people think that I might be telling the truth, some are afraid of being seen to be hating or befriending me.

The past few months have been frightening and disillusioning for those of us who once fondly believed a) that free speech prevails in the United Kingdom, and b) that British journalists do not draw conclusions about important matters without first doing in-depth research. I'm amazed by the number of backs who have made their minds up without visiting Ogoniland.

Saro-Wiwa's acolytes have been allowed to speak – unopposed and at great length – on a thousand platforms. Meanwhile, representatives of Saro-Wiwa's victims have, in effect, been gagged. Many are profoundly traumatised by the obsequious fanfare surrounding this first anniversary of his hanging.

Meanwhile, I've been told that I should not show my face at writers' events, that I'll never work again for anyone half-way respectable, and that my parents and I will be killed in our beds when our "protectors" (the Nigerian government) are driven out of office.

The head of a writers' group has refused to meet me to discuss my concerns. MPs have vilified me. I have lost friends who belong to the Anglo-African literary establishment. I'd have gained much more if I'd jumped on the pro-Saro-Wiwa bandwagon or if I'd kept my mouth tightly shut.

As for young Ken Wiwa's claim that I'm simply slavishly echoing my father's hatred of his father: my father did not hate Saro-Wiwa until 1993, when Saro-Wiwa publicly deposited my father's name on his "traitors" hit-list.

I frequently disagree with my father. I did not vote for my father's political party in the 1983 elections in Nigeria. I have written and broadcast criticisms of some of my father's cronies. And I was actually closer, in some ways, to Saro-Wiwa than I was to my own father. Saro-Wiwa got me my first columnist job on a Nigerian newspaper.

I miss Saro-Wiwa's cleverness, charismatic wit and moments of total sweetness and warmth. I'd give anything to believe that he was not capable of incitement to murder. And I concede that he was capable of incitement very grudgingly indeed. I still make excuses for him.

I baffle desperately about his brief moments of madness. I say that Saro-Wiwa was not intrinsically wicked. By insisting that he had many redeeming features, that I'm sure he didn't really want those four men dead, and that capital punishment is judicial murder under every single circumstance, I have upset a lot of people in the anti-Saro-Wiwa camp back home (including my parents). So here I am, stuck in the middle and isolated.

All I ask is that those who despise me should seriously consider my assertion that I've taken the suicidal and reluctant decision to criticise a global icon, former intimate and dearly-loved mentor only because I sincerely believe that he is an unsuitable candidate for canonisation, due to the fact that he was indirectly responsible for at least four deaths.

I sometimes think that people are not so much genuinely contemptuous of Saro-Wiwa's critics as cowardly and terrified that their grandstanding on his behalf will be proved to be fraudulent or misguided. It is hard for them to admit that they have been wrong about something so serious.

The writer is a broadcaster and journalist living in London.

Yesterday was a day of Remembrance.

Yesterday you remembered the men, women and children who suffered and died because of the horrors of war. You remembered soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians with equal sadness.

Now we'd like you to extend those thoughts a little further – to the people suffering today, all around the world, because of war.

Right now, in Central Africa, the brutalities of war are claiming victims in large numbers. Already one million people are fleeing the fighting. It doesn't matter whether they are Hutu, Tutsi, Zairean or Rwandan. Women and children are fleeing in terror. Starvation, thirst and disease will kill them, even if the bullets don't.

These victims have no more control over their suffering than did the families during the Blitz – or any of the other victims of mankind's inhumanity to man.

We will go on helping those who suffer through war. And when the wars are over, we will go on helping the survivors to rebuild their lives. We will not forget them, either.

To make a donation to help our work in Central Africa, please call 01865 31 31 31.

And so is today.

OXFAM

Founded in 1942, Oxfam works with poor people regardless of race or religion in their struggle against hunger, disease, exploitation and poverty.

Her mother, however, was more interested in Marje's mar-

in 1943 and went to the *Daily Herald* as Fashion Editor, under Hugh Cudlipp's brother Percy, and became Women's Editor in 1950; she never learnt to type or do shorthand, and wrote all her copy in longhand (rather harder to read after her stroke in 1979), developing the effortless, classless style that she never changed, "as acceptable" as said her friend and long-time colleague Felicity Green, "to readers of the *Times* or the *Telegraph* as the *Mirror*". Bob Edwards, one of her editors, asked

Glamour, pizzazz, pulling power: Hugh Cudlipp described Marje Proops as 'the first British journalist to attain instant Recognition status'

through the more difficult letters with him. Chesser was greatly impressed by what he called her humility in seeking advice.

Hugh Cudlipp hired her as a columnist on the *Daily Mirror* in 1954; he has described her since as "the first British journalist to attain the Instant Recognition status previously enjoyed by film stars". It was her ability to make friends with, to get along with, the subjects of her column that made her pages so original. They all genuinely liked her: she became Dame Edith Sitwell's "little friend", Cary Grant's frequent Innuendo companion, the then Duke of

Bedford's partner in a midnight sandwich at Woburn. Sophia Loren talked to her wistfully of her longing for children. She cuddled the Archbishop of Canterbury (thinking his beatifically outstretched arms were welcoming her, as indeed they might have been), enticed Barbara Castle on to a donkey, and listened to Mary Wilson's poetry hot from the pen. She knew all the politicians and attended political conferences of both Labour and Conservative parties. "Immediately Marjorie arrived," said Geoffrey Goodman, a long-time political commentator and colleague at the *Mirror*. "people would stop

looking at the PM, whoever it was, Margaret Thatcher included, and rush over to talk to her. And she loved it. She was such a true star." As Percy Cudlipp had said, she was a sex writer. She had glamour, pizzazz, pulling power. She was a huge part of a huge success, one of many starry names littering the firmament of the *Daily Mirror*.

One of the most important, if less starry, was that of Philip Levy: a tall, quiet, immensely impressive man, he was the *Mirror's* chief legal adviser from 1955 to 1970. Proops's 20-year-long passionate love affair with him was conducted with immense discretion, both at the

By the Seventies, she had become an establishment figure. She served on two government committees, one on One-Parent Families, appointed by Richard Crossman, and the other the gambling commission chaired by the late Lord Rothschild. She was taken seriously by the Es-

Penny Vincenz
Rebecca Marjorie Israel, journalist: born Woking, Surrey c1911; journalist, Daily Mirror 1939-45, 1954-66, Assistant Editor 1978-96; Fashion Editor, Daily Herald 1945-50, Women's Editor 1950-54; OBE 1969; journalist, Sunday Mirror, 1992-9; married 1935 Sidney Proops (died 1988; one son); died London 10 November 1996.

Most jazz musicians develop an individual sound when they are young and then work at honing it over the rest of their lives. Louis Armstrong, when he died in 1971, had a trumpet style which was irrevocably linked to this eloquent playing of the Twenties. The saxophonist Eddie Harris was almost unique in leaping to fame without ever having a consistent and recognizable sound. He made more noises (then a shed full of monophones) and the trouble was that most of them were new and thus instantly personal.

On the other hand, he had a sound. He had the bank.

His first hit, a version of the theme from the film *Exodus*, entered the Top-40 and sold a million copies in 1960. Miles Davis

stepped down to record Harris's composition "Freedom Jazz Dance," a reasonably postmodern bop jazz tune, in 1966 and the recording of "Compared To What?," extracted from the album *Swiss Movement* which Harris made at the 1969 Montreux Jazz Festival with his contemporary pianist, Les McCann, sold another million copies.

Born in Chicago, Harris was based there all his life, despite a successful period in New York and constant tours around the world. He began his career studying piano with a cousin and playing with choirs in Baptist churches. He then made his professional debut as pianist with the saxophonist Gene Ammons.

Harris regarded himself as an innovator, starting fashions

rather than emulating them. Edeffo is a better word for his brand of music. In the past, he sometimes played a tenor saxophone with a trombone mouthpiece and a similar combination called a reed trumpet, and his eccentricities made him very much a loner within the jazz community. In 1967 he was the first to unleash upon the world the Varitone attachment to his tenor saxophone. This device gave the instrument a completely new range of electronic sounds – at the expense of the individuality of the player. Saddled with one by an unfeeling record company, the trumpeter from Calicut said, "I didn't want to be working on my trumpet one day like my life until I think it's good and it's what I want."

The guy who invented this takes all that away and leaves me as an artist and a burlesque dancer."

When Harris played the tenor saxophone, his main instrument, in an orthodox way, he remained enigmatic. At that time black players were supposed to sound harsh and angular like Sonny Rollins or John Coltrane. Listeners in clubs became disoriented as Harris produced a "white" sound, smooth in the manner of Stan Getz or Al Cohen. For this reason, Harris was never trusted by the jazz aficionado.

"A lot of musicians are suspicious of electronics," he said. "I don't mind and that's because you always have opposition to change. Change breeds contempt because whatever you

beliefs are not have to go back and examine them.

"The unit will add 10 years to your life-span because you don't have to exert yourself as much. The unit I use is a preamp unit which can emulate different woodwind sounds. At the press of a button it can sound like a bassoon or a tuba or an oboe or whatever; they have concocted on the classis system."

It is an unfortunate fact that there is a tide of racial preference which constantly ebbs and flows in jazz. During the Sixties and also today, jazz played by black musicians is in the ascendant, making it difficult for jazz-loving white musicians of similar talents to get as much work as their black confreres. Harris had an aggressive phi-

lophony in this respect, but also the recognition that established white musicians had also created work for blacks.

As long ago as 1967, he said, "I think the jazz scene is finally going to evolve into a going thing again - Don Ellis" (a white trumpeter band-mate of Harris-r) "has his big band, and there's Stan Kenton and Buddy Rich. I'm pulling for them, because I consider them to be Elvis Presleys and Bobby Darins of jazz - and, once they make it, the coloured musicians will naturally have to make it, too."

One of the best-known of the multiracials of Harris's aboriginal was during a visit to England in 1972, then he recorded *Eddie Harris in the UK with the British rock stars Steve Win-*

wood, Jeff Beck, Zoot Money, Rich Grech and Albert Lee. Harris continued, "I think until recently, making a remarkable album in 1992, *You, For Me, For Ever More*, the circumstances of which in some ways typified his musical life. He had intended to record a duet session with a pianist and Harris on tenor but, when the pianist didn't show up, Harris recorded all the piano parts himself and then added his tenor sax improvisations. Despite a brave effort, the results were flawed."

Steve Vose

Eddie Harris, tenor saxophonist, pianist, organist, vocalist, composer (born August 20 October 1936; died Los Angeles 5 November 1996).



Harris' bizarre convulsions.
Photograph: Bertone

BIRTHS
ALLENBY: BOB HUTCHINGS
MR. GRAVES: On 10 November, to Amanda (née Mayhew) and Christopher, a son, Benjamin William Allenby, a baby for Stephanie.

HUTCHINGS: BOB HUTCHINGS
MR. HUTCHINGS: On 10 November, to Nicole (née Allenby), and Richard, a son, John Edward, a brother for Nicholas.

DEATHS
BERRETT: Samuel H. Berrett OBE PD
Died on 8 November, aged 78 years. Dearly loved husband of Jackie and father of three. Survived by three children, Mr. and Mrs. John Berrett, Mr. Arthur and Suzi, service at Trentham Parish Church, Trentham, on 11 November. Burial in Trentham Cemetery, on Friday 15 November. Donations referred to St. John Ambulance, 15 Lichfield Road, Stafford ST17 4JL. Enquiries to Mrs. Berrett, 15 Lichfield Road, Stafford, ST17 4JL. Funeral Service, 01782 51867-8.

RADICKE: Edward Albert (Tedy), and
family, following a stroke, on 8 November 1991, he was 89. He will be greatly missed by family and friends. At his request there will be no ceremony, but a memorial service will be arranged at St Antony's College, Oxford.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr S. A. Lovegrove and Miss R. C. Brooke. The engagement is announced between Stephen, son of Mr and Mrs John Lovegrove, of Great Alne, Warwickshire, and Kate, daughter of Mr Timothy and the Hon Mrs Ferguson-Brooke, of Clipping Warden, Northamptonshire.

Birthdays

Dame Peggy Funnar MP, 70; Lord Gerald of Chicheley, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 70; Dr William Hayes, President, St John's College, Oxford, 70; Dr Joseph Henderson MP, 63; Miss Kim Hunter, actress, 74; Sir Peter Lloyd MP, 59; Miss Jennifer Funnar, chief executive, Millennium Commission, 52; Miss Stephanie Powers, actress, 33; Miss Jo Stafford, singer, 78; Sir William Sutherland, CBE, Constable, Lothian and Borders Police, 63; Professor John Turner, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Edinburgh University, 55; Frederick John Clark, founder of the Samaritans, 85; Mr Neil Young, rock singer and guitarist, 50.

Anniversaries

Births: Edward Vernon ("Old Tom"), Admiral, 1684; Alexander

Pfaffenberger Borodino, composer, 1870; **Pfeiffer**, Jewish author, Rodin, sculptor, 1869; **Piechowski**, Stanislaw, Polish composer, 1840; **Piercy**, Grace of Monaco, (Grace Patricia Kelly), 1929; **Pesther Canute** (the Great), King of England and Denmark, 1035; Sir **John Hawkins**, naval commander and navigator, 1595; Thomas Fairfax, first baron Fairfax of Cameron, Parliamentary army Commander-in-Chief, 1649; **Petrarch**, Italian poet, 1304; **Petrovich Noveltis**, 1865; Emma Magdalena Rosalia Marie Josephine Margarete, Baroness Orzov, novelist, 1847; John James Mackintosh Stewart "Michael Jones", literary scholar and author, 1904. On this day: John Bunyan, author, was arrested for preaching without a license, 1660; The *Illustrated London News*, the first English newspaper in Britain, the *British Chronicle*, was published, 1764; the first flying-timpeze act was performed by Jules Léotard at the Cirque Napoléon, Paris, 1859; a great eruption of Mount Vesuvius occurred, 1867; the remains of Captain Scott and his companions were found in Antarctica, 1912; the Emperor Karl of Austria-Hungary abdicated, and Austria became a Republic, 1918; in elections in Germany, the Nazis received 23% of the vote, 1933; 1945: the Allies took Tobruk, 1942; today is the Feast Day of St Aurluc or Anastasis, St Benedict of Nursia, St Cadwaller, St Cuman or Be Tall, St Cunibert, St Emilian Ouz, St Joseph of Poland, St

Lectures
National Gallery: Mari Griffiths, "Grand Tours" (1): Richard Wilson and Thomas Jones, *The Lure of Italy*, 1 pm.
British Museum: Dr Albert Museum: Caroline Rinehart, "Metal Inlaid Decoration on Furniture", 2.30 pm.
 Tate Gallery: David Jacques, "Tourists in Gardens: the Lure of England", 1 pm.
British Museum: Nicole Douek, "Myths of Creation and the Gods of Ancient Egypt", 1.15 pm.
RIBA Architecture Centre, London
Dr. Margaret McGovern talks about his work, 6.30 pm.

Lord Mayor's Banquet
The Lord Mayor of London, Mr Roger Cook, accompanied by the Sheriffs of the City of London, Mr Cive Martin and Mr Keith Knowles, and their ladies, entertained the outgoing Lord Mayor, Sir John Calverley, and Lady Calverley, at a Banquet held last yesterday evening at the Grosvenor Hotel, London EC2. The Lord Mayor, Sir John Calverley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor were the speakers.

Longer pr

R v Latham; Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Kennedy, Mr Justice McKinnon, Mr Justice Johnson) 5 November 1996

The existing sentencing tariff for offences of manslaughter resulting from the use of a knife, deliberately carried as a weapon in a public place, was too low and should be increased from around seven years to between 10 and 12 years.

The Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) granted an Attorney General's reference under section 36 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 for leave to refer to the court a sentence which he regarded as unduly lenient. The offender was Daniel George Latham, who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for manslaughter, with three concurrent sentences of 18 months each for unlawful wounding, after pleading guilty to these offences before Mr Justice Wright at Maidstone Crown Court on 18 April 1996.

Daniel Cubans Smith (175 BH)

Prison senter

LAW R

12 November

er young men in the car park of a night-club in Gillingham, Kent. The offender produced a knife and stabbed four of his opponents. One of them died and the others required hospital treatment.

In interview the offender said he had been attacked and had used a knife in self-defence. He had been carrying a butterfly-knife, the blade of which was almost four inches long. He said he carried it in case he had trouble with others with whom he had previously fought. He said he had "lunged" with the knife but could not explain the injuries to three of the victims' backs.

He was originally indicted for murder and wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, contrary to section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. But after discussion between counsel and the judge in chambers

Penalties for knife

REPORT

ber 1996

Attorney General was entitled to refer the matter to the Court of Appeal, and that court, if satisfied it would be right to do so, could increase the sentence. The discussion in chambers gave rise to no jurisdictional bar.

The Attorney General submitted that for offences of manslaughter resulting from the deliberate carrying of a knife in a public place with a view to it being used as a weapon by someone who took drink or drugs and then used it so as to cause death, a sentencing tariff had become established which was inappropriate.

In relation to this type of manslaughter, courts in recent years had tended to impose a sentence of about seven years' imprisonment on conviction, and four years on a plea of guilty. The sentence imposed by Wright J in this case was thus

fe killings

a sentence within the tariff range could not be considered "unduly lenient" so as to enable the court to interfere. There was nothing in the wording of section 36 to prevent the Attorney General's concluding that a tariff sentence was unduly lenient and it was difficult to see what there was to prevent the appeal court from coming to the same conclusion.

Section 2 of the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 increased to four years the penalty for carrying an offensive weapon without lawful authority of reasonable excuse. This demonstrated that Parliament shared the much publicised public concern about the carrying of knives.

Their Lordships were persuaded that the tariff sentence of seven years on conviction for this type of case was too low. Where an offender went out with a knife, carrying it as a weapon, and used it to cause death, even if there was provocation, he should expect to receive

LAW REPORT

12 November 1996

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Daniel Robert Smith (CF5 80)

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Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen built an inventory of Buckingham Palace, and accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, attend the 1990 Royal Film Performance at the Olden Cinema, Leicester Square, London WC2. The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel of the Grenadier Guards, attends a Reception at Wellington Barracks, London SW1. The Princess Royal, President, Save the Children Fund, attends a reception at the offices of CIBC World Company, London SE1, and visits the Save the Children Fund, Birmingham, Essex; opens Nuffield Green Community Association's new Community Centre.

te, Bradstreet, Essex; as Patron, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, visits the Liverpool Citizens Advice Bureau, Grays, Essex; and as President, the Phoenix Royal Trust for Cancer, visits Basilston Cancer Centre, Basildon, Essex. Princess Margaret visits the Crowe Factory at North Rye; Motor Cars, Chesham; and visits the restored Lyceum Theatre, Ormskirk. The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Clerical and Missionary Society, attends a concert at the Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer and attends a dinner at St John's Church, London ECL. The Duke of Kent, Vice-Chairman, the British Overseas Trade Board,

to the South-Flay Gallery at Mirra Road and Tay-
lor, Langdon; officially open the Lockwood
Community Hospital, Lockwood; and visits Gates
Rubber Company Ltd, Dunstons, Princess Alexandra
upwards the new Women's and Children's
Wing at Lewisham Hospital, London SE13.

Lord Justice Kennedy said the offender, then aged 20, and a friend of his had become involved in a fight with eight oth-

Although prosecuting counsel had not registered any objection to this at the time, the

His Lordship rejected the defendant's submission that section 36 of the 1988 Act did not permit the appeal court to increase an existing tariff, since

Paul Maerath, Barrister

No tax until is in

[illegible]

Carp

Mc Cicotti

Alliance, a 100-member, non-profit, tax-exempt trust, has raised \$1,000 to help pay the expenses when the owner of a stock market investment company is paid a large sum of money for legal help.

The owner of the company from whom the money was taken, a month and a half ago, aimed to give the company 150 members and 250 shares of stock.

Other ways...

[illegible]

business & city

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CBI in Harrogate: Gordon Brown unveils anti-inflation strategy as John Monks calls for partnership between employers and unions

No windfall tax details until Labour is in power

Michael Harrison and Chris Godsmark

Labour yesterday disclosed that it would not spell out details of its windfall tax on the privatised utilities until it was in power. But it went further than it has gone before in setting out its tough anti-inflationary strategy, indicating that it would aim at a target of under 2.5 per cent.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, said Labour would take representations from all interested parties on the windfall levy and "announce the details of its implementation once, in government, we have consulted the regulators".

The comment, in an address to the Confederation of British Industry annual conference in Harrogate, surprised business leaders who had expected details of the tax to emerge by the time of Labour's manifesto.

However, CBI leaders took heart at Mr Brown's pledge on low and stable inflation and his commitment to keep it at or below the rate of rival economies such as Germany. Mr Brown said: "We will not be satisfied with simply talking as tough as the Tories. For, unlike the Government, we plan to deliver on our inflation target. We will want our inflation performance to match that of our competitors in Europe."

If that was achieved then "never again should interest rate decisions affecting the long term appear to be manipulated for short-term party political ends," he said. Aides said later that a target of 2.5 per cent or less was "feasible", pointing out that inflation was running at 2.9 per cent against the Government's target of 2.5 per cent and a European average of 2.4 per cent.

A CBI spokesman said it

welcomed Labour's commitment to low and stable inflation. But the further delay in detailing which companies will face the tax, how it will be structured and how much it will raise fuelled speculation that Labour has run into legal difficulties over the controversial levy.

Mr Brown emphasised it would be "a one-off windfall levy from the excess profits of the privatised utilities". "I think people increasingly understand that the windfall levy is going to happen and that it is a measure which has a clear and identifiable purpose," he said.

His aides said that in principle all privatised utilities would be considered for inclusion in the tax but they could not give a definition of which companies would be vulnerable. Estimates of how much the tax might raise range from £5bn to £10bn but a great deal hinges on how the tax is framed.

Labour sources conceded that Alastair Campbell, press secretary to Labour leader Tony Blair, had "dropped a clanger" when he stated last week that the tax would apply to "privatised monopoly utilities". That enabled the electricity generator PowerGen to claim that it would escape the levy.

Michael Heseltine, deputy Prime Minister, stepped up pressure on Labour over the windfall tax, describing it as "Danegeld". "And you know the moral of that story. Once you've paid the Danegeld you never get rid of the Dane."

Mr Heseltine claimed that the levy would mean lower investment, higher prices, or both. "It's a proposed levy on each of us. On 8 million shareholders. On every consumer of gas, water, electricity. On everyone with a telephone. On jobs, on pensions."



Gordon Brown: 'We will not be satisfied with simply talking as tough as the Tories. We plan to deliver on our inflation target'

'End campaign against 48-hour week'

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, yesterday urged employers to end their campaign against European legislation to impose a maximum 48-hour working week on British companies.

In the first speech to the CBI's annual conference by a TUC leader, Mr Monks insisted that the rise of what he called "the European dimension" was inevitable, despite the Government's opt out from the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, and the desire of busi-

nesses to "be like Greta Garbo and be left alone".

The European Court of Justice will today hand out judgement on the UK's objections to the directive on working hours, which gets round the British opt out on social legislation by treating the 48-hour week as a health and safety issue.

Mr Monks appealed for a partnership with employers to help implement the new rules. "If it does happen I hope that it will lead to consultation about how it can be applied flexibly and efficiently, but effectively in the UK," he told delegates.

The TUC leader pledged to work for a new partnership with business, but in a combative address argued that the British tradition of benevolent employers was getting weaker.

He said: "The relentless pressure to enhance shareholder value has damaged it in many a British company and in some cases destroyed it altogether." He gave the example of Marks & Spencer, which last week announced it would take on an extra 2,000 staff and saw its shares immediately marked down by City investors.

Though Mr Monks's speech was warmly applauded by del-

egates, his attitude to Europe exposed sharp differences in the conference hall. Another speaker, John Neill, the chief executive of the Unipart car parts group, attacked the "sclerotic vision" behind the Social Chapter.

"We don't need to sign a blank cheque to Brussels," he said. Unipart is well known for its high-profile employee training schemes with a company "university" and its backing for the concept of stakeholding. However the company derecognised unions from its plants in 1991.

Mr Neill said Britain now

ranked far ahead of France, Germany or Italy on labour flexibility as a result of policies pioneered by Lady Thatcher in the early eighties. Imposing new burdens on business, he said, would see the UK flattened by "the Asian juggernauts".

Several other speakers were more conciliatory, backing Mr Monks's talk of partnerships with unions. Bruce Warman, personnel director of the Vauxhall car company and a former colleague of Mr Neill, said: "We have European legislation ebbing at our shores. Maybe it's a tidal wave and we cannot ignore trade unions."

Kay and ICI lock horns on policy

Michael Harrison

John Kay, an arch proponent of the stakeholder philosophy and an adviser to Tony Blair, was at loggerheads with ICI yesterday after he accused the chemicals group of putting profits above the interests of customers, employees and local communities.

Professor Kay, chairman of London Economics, said that ICI, chaired by Sir Ronnie Hampel, who also heads up Cadbury 11, had changed its business strategy after the abortive takeover attempt by Hanson to one that "acknowledges no claim other than that of shareholders".

He went on to compare its approach with that of Marks & Spencer, which was successful because its commitment to employees and customers was not a policy of the board but a characteristic of the very company.

Professor Kay said that in 1986 ICI's stated objectives were to "enhance the wealth and well-being of our shareholders, our employees, our customers and the communities which we serve and in which we operate" through innovative and responsible application of chemistry. After the Hanson bid its objective instead became to "maximise value for our shareholders by focusing on business areas where we have market leadership, a technological edge and a world competitive base".

This change of tack, Professor Kay said, was the product of a "deformed style of capitalism" which, far from underpinning the market system, would bring it to its knees. But ICI said it had devised a fresh set of objectives and mission statement since Charles Miller-Smith took over as chief executive a year ago.

Says Kay: "Our vision is to be the industry leader in creating value for customers and shareholders." This would be achieved by, among other things, "inspiration and reward of talented people, exemplary performance in safety and health and responsible for the environment".

Carpethaggers cash in on A&L loophole

Nic Cicutti

Alliance & Leicester "carpethaggers", whom the building society tried to shut out of a £1,000 free shares handout when the society floats on the stock market, are in line for cash payouts worth thousands of pounds instead because of a legal loophole.

The society sparked anger from many policyholders last month after announcing that it aimed to give each of its 2.4 million members a fixed amount of 250 shares each on flotation.

Other societies, including

Halifax and Woolwich, intend to give extra amounts depending on savings balances.

Policyholders who joined the A&L after its 31 December 1995 cut-off date for new accounts cannot vote next month on the planned flotation. And the Building Societies Act says they are therefore not entitled to free shares after conversion in 1997.

However, because accounts opened between 31 December and 16 January, when they were halted, give the "carpethaggers" all other membership rights, they are still entitled to

a cash share of the society's assets. Payouts will be based on about 11 per cent of the amount in an individual's account.

John Denison, an A&L member, said: "A loyal investor who has had £50,000 in an account dating from any time before 31 December will be eligible to vote and, if the proposals go ahead, he will receive the flat rate 250 shares worth about £1,000. The 'carpethagger', who opened an account with £50,000 after that date is entitled to receive, if the proposals go ahead, a statutory cash bonus of £5,500. I find this be-

yond belief." Those benefiting will be among the few thousand who opened accounts in the two-week period in early January, when the A&L finally scrapped membership rights accounts.

The society tried to limit the free cash entitlement by setting 31 January as the final date for boosting the amount in a policyholders' account. But savers adding to their balances before then will be entitled to the cash.

An A&L spokesman said: "We estimate that the total number of people who will

benefit from this loophole is insignificant and have done everything we can to stop January Joiners, as we call them, from benefiting disproportionately."

He added that the society's flat-rate shares distribution was fair because 83 per cent of the society's eligible members had less than £5,000 in their accounts.

Woolwich said yesterday that none of its carpethaggers, who joined just before the flotation was announced, would receive similar benefits because unlike the A&L its vote would not take place until next year.

First Choice ousts chief exec at cost of £640,000

Patrick Toohar

Francis Baron was ousted yesterday as chief executive of First Choice Holidays, and will receive £640,000 in compensation under the terms of his service contract with the tour operator.

News of the pay-off, equivalent to two years' salary, is likely to cause consternation among institutional investors and re-ignite the "payment for failure" debate currently raging in corporate governance circles.

During Mr Baron's three-year tenure at the helm of First Choice, the share price more than halved, while in the year to October 1995 the company reported a £3.4m loss before exceptional items, having made profits of over £30m in the early Nineties.

First Choice blamed Mr Baron's sudden departure on a clash of personalities in the boardroom. "Unfortunately, his relationships with many of his key colleagues have become unworkable and in these circumstances the board felt the continued progress of the group would be compromised if Francis remained as group chief executive," said Michael Julien, the chairman.

Mr Baron, whose manage-



Battle lost: Francis Baron says you can't win them all

while Ian Chubb, currently non-executive deputy chairman, will assume a full executive role.

It is understood that matters came to a head at a board meeting last Friday when three directors - Mr Long, finance director David Gill, and Ken Smith, managing director of Air 2000, the in-house airline - insisted either Mr Baron went or they would resign en masse.

Mr Baron, who joined the group in 1993 when it was known as Owners Abroad, is credited with masterminding the company's revival and successfully re-branding exercise which propelled the company into third place as the UK's leading tour operator, behind Thomson and Airtrans.

But profits nose-dived as holidaymakers, faced with rising levels of personal taxation and a weak pound, stopped booking early or simply stayed at home.

Perhaps Mr Baron's biggest achievement was to secure a £44m rescue rights issue last year to fund expansion in Canada.

His departure raises the prospect of this year's dividend being cut. Mr Baron is known to have wanted to reward those investors who backed the company in the rights issue by maintaining the payout.

Strong pound halves British Steel profit

Magnus Grimond

British Steel warned yesterday that further strengthening of the pound would force the group to speed up redundancy plans in an effort to maintain its competitiveness against European producers.

Unveiling more than halved interim profits yesterday, Sir Brian Moffat, chairman and chief executive, said the strengthening currency meant the group's cost competitiveness had been eroded while competitors had been advantaged. Efficiency measures already

planned would have to be accelerated to regain the competitive edge built up over the past two to three years.

"This will impact on all businesses. We are not talking about radical closures, but we are talking about improvements in productivity which are bound to impact on the employment situation," he said.

British Steel shed 500 staff in the first half. Officials said any further job losses would not be significantly in excess of the normal annual attrition rate of 500 to 1,000 from a workforce which totalled 53,400 at the end

of September. But Sir Brian also signalled the end of the downward steel price spiral in Europe which has caused profits to plunge from £50m to £25m in the latest six months. The market was now "just past the low point in the cycle", he said, although how far it picked up depended on customers and the general environment.

British Steel said that the UK market had held up in the first half, but Europe had been weak as a result of destocking and weak underlying demand, leading to sharp price falls. Stainless steel slumped 45 per cent to the

lowest price for a decade, but had since recovered between 5 and 8 per cent, with another increase in the pipeline.

"The destocking phase has ended, with price increases across a broad range of products," Sir Brian said. This pointed to cautious optimism for the period ahead, with British Steel expected to operate at full capacity and strong order books in the second half.

The main price rises had been seen in "value-added" lines, British Steel said, including coated galvanneal, used for pressings in the car indus-

try, and heavy structural steel, where a £10 a tonne price increase had recently been put through. But Sir Brian said the company would inevitably be a price follower as its European competitors used the strength of sterling to raise prices.

The group unveiled its first expansion plans in the Far East yesterday, involving a £29m joint venture to build an organic coating line and roll profiling facilities with Jindal Iron & Steel of India. Sir Brian said he hoped the "relatively modest" investment would be the start of more than one project there.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Month's chg	Change	1996 High	1996 Low	1995 High	1995 Low	1994 High	1994 Low
FTSE 100	3810.80	-37.7	-1.0	4073.10	3632.30	4.03			
FTSE 250	4285.60	-33.5	-0.8	4598.80	4075.30	3.55			
FTSE 350	1853.40	-18.8	-1.0	2092.70	1815.80	3.55			
FTSE SmallCap	2158.04	-1.8	-0.1	2244.26	1954.06	3.15			
FTSE All-Share	1829.51	-17.7	-1.0	1904.54	1791.95	3.67			
New York	8219.83	+107.9	+1.3	8218.83	5032.84	2.15			
DAX	27201.04	+388.0	+1.4	22688.80	19734.70	0.77			
Hong Kong	12751.16	+221.9	+1.8	12775.17	10804.87	3.29			
Nikkei	2738.83	+58.6	+2.1	2738.83	2253.35	1.21			
Statistics as of 11 November									

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.08	6.81	7.87	7.88	7.78	7.78	7.99		
US	5.28	5.56	5.27	5.89	6.58	6.33			
Japan	0.44	0.59	2.71	2.99					
Germany	3.06	3.26	5.82	6.36	6.78				
Bond Yields									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.08	6.81	7.87	7.88	7.78	7.78	7.99		
US	5.28	5.56	5.27	5.89	6.58	6.33			
Japan	0.44	0.59	2.71	2.99					
Germany	3.06	3.26	5.82	6.36	6.78				
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.08	6.81	7.87	7.88	7.78	7.78	7.99		
US	5.28	5.56	5.27	5.89	6.58	6.33			
Japan	0.44	0.59	2.71	2.99					
Germany	3.06	3.26	5.82	6.36	6.78				

CURRENCIES									
\$/£									
Index	Close	Month's chg	Year's chg	1996 High	1996 Low	1995 High	1995 Low	1994 High	1994 Low
\$ (London)	1.8447	-0.20c	-1.57%	1.8765	1.8080	+0.07	0.8345		
\$ (New York)	1.8480	-0.10c	-1.57%	1.8793	1.8080	-0.04	0.8348		
DM (London)	2.4788	-0.61c	-2.23%	2.4838	1.5059	-0.19c	1.4123		
¥ (London)	183.495	-10.57c	-5.83%	186.633	111.550	-10.215	100.700		
£ Index	50.8	-0.1	-0.3%	53.8	96.2	unch	53.8		
OTHER INDICATORS									
Index	Close	Month's chg	Year's chg	1996 High	1996 Low	1995 High	1995 Low	1994 High	1994 Low
Oil Brent \$	22.53	-0.21	-18.62	153.8	2.12c	150.6	14 Nov		
Gold \$	378.90	-1.55	-388.85	108.9	+2.39c	105.7	Jan 27		
Gold £	230.38	-0.66	-246.84	Base Rates	6.00%	6.75			

BAe scoops £480m order from Australia

British Aerospace has won its biggest single order worth an estimated A\$1bn (£480m) for its successful Hawk military training jet, writes Chris Godsmark.

The Australian Air Force has chosen BAe as the preferred candidate to replace its existing fleet of 87 Italian Aer Macchi trainers which have been in service for more than 25 years.

The new contract is for BAe to guarantee to provide a given amount of flying hours rather than planes, but the total number of Hawks likely to be supplied is believed to be around 35. The list price for the

plane is between £10m and £16m. BAe beat off competition from Aer Macchi and McDonnell Douglas of the US.

The Hawks will be specially modified to match the cockpit design of the RAAF's fleet of McDonnell Douglas F18 fighters. The first planes will enter service by 2000, with several BAe staff likely to provide back-up service in Australia.

BAe said that the order would guarantee jobs for staff in Brough near Hull and Warton near Preston and a small number of extra jobs could be created.

Regulatory cloud lifted from BAA

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Sir John Egan, chief executive of BAA, was in upbeat mood at yesterday's presentation of interim results for Britain's dominant airports operator. With a relatively benign regulatory framework in place on airport landing charges, a big cloud has been removed from the group's horizon.

Sir John was also sounding confident about another issue that could act as a brake on the shares' progress - a Labour windfall tax on the privatised utilities. Sir John said he had received no word that BAA would be included in such a tax and analysts agree that with such a heavy capital expenditure programme, BAA is likely to escape.

That leaves only one potential problem - the possible end of duty-free shopping in Europe by 1999. Even here BAA is bullish, for if the concession is abolished BAA will be allowed to recoup some of the lost revenue by raising airport landing charges.

But far from backing away from duty-free, BAA is expanding its interests. It is expanding its international business outside of Europe and over the weekend announced the formation of a new company, World Duty Free, to develop its duty-free operations around the world. BAA says the worldwide duty-free market is worth £21bn and has been growing at double-digit rates for the past few years. With a 5 per cent share of the market so far, BAA hopes to build that share with or without the European business.

The company also announced plans over the weekend to take over a number of UK contracts with Nuance, the former Alders International business acquired by Swissair earlier this year.

All this accompanied decent figures for the six months to 30 September which contained few surprises. Pre-tax profits edged up by 3.4 per cent to £304m. This reflected an adjustment of £11m of airport charges which have been "re-phased" to the second half. On a like-for-like basis profits were 10.5 per cent ahead.

Passenger numbers at BAA's seven airports were up by 4.9 per cent to 8.7 million in October, although short-haul traffic in the summer was hit by a cut in capacity by the four operators. Stansted performed strongly and made its debut first-half profit.

Much of BAA's promise lies in its retail operations which account for 44 per cent of revenue. Retail income per passenger rose by 7.2 per cent to £4.20, with perfume sales particularly strong.

BAA is also starting to show its abilities lie beyond just being a landlord. It is developing new formats of its own, such as Whiskies of the World. Forthcoming openings include Studio 55.

Sidlaw heads out of the woods

New management at Sidlaw is at last showing signs of leading the group out of the woods it got into when it paid over the odds for Courtauld's flexible packaging operations in 1993. That £78m deal transformed Sidlaw from a minor Scottish mini-conglomerate into one of Europe's largest packaging companies and led management to make the fatal error of pursuing volume at a time when margins were being squeezed at both ends.

The old strategy contributed to losses which have deepened from £112,000 to £7.27m in the year to September. But since the October arrival of packaging man John Durston as chief executive, there are grounds for be-

lieving the worst may be over. Most immediately, the exceptional items which have scarred recent figures, rising from £7.36m to £8.23m in the latest period, should not recur and should lead to future benefits. Of the total last year, £5.34m related to the net costs of the sale or closure of underperforming parts of the packaging division.

But more important to the group's revival is the path being laid down by Mr Durston, whose room for manoeuvre has been vastly increased by September's £56m sale of the ASCO oil services business. At a stroke, that deal erases Sidlaw's former high gearing and throws up a £16.5m profit, allowing him to pursue his stated strategy of seeking higher margin business.

He sees scope for expansion in growing areas with high barriers to entry like individual chocolate biscuit wrappers.

Growth rates of 2.5-4 per cent may not sound much, but they are better than the flat or declining sales typical in traditional mainstays.

He has set himself the demanding target of raising margins to around 8 per cent over the next two to three years

Prowting being squeezed

Interim results from Uxbridge-based Prowting illustrate well the problems facing smaller housebuilders. In a rapidly consolidating sector, where greater size gives increasing economies of scale, only just being among the top two dozen of housebuilders is not an ideal position to be in.

Not even its location in southern England, where the housing market is relatively buoyant, has helped Prowting's cause. While the larger players such as Bellway and Westbury are reporting good profit and margin improvements, Prowting is going in the opposite direction.

In the six months to August, the pre-tax number almost halved from £4.1m to £2.2m on sales 17 per cent higher at £59.2m. The maintained 1.5p dividend was uncovered by earnings per share of 1.6p (3.3p).

Prowting blamed an "extremely competitive" new homes market, where price increases have failed to match those secured in the second-hand market. Buyers still seem to have the upper hand and are driving a hard bargain, especially for new houses.

As a result, margins remain under pressure, collapsing to 5.7 per cent from 11.3 per cent a year ago, even though the cost of part-exchange and other incentive schemes fell and the average selling price rose to almost £90,000 from £77,000, as more large houses in more expensive areas were built.

Prowting expects to complete 1,350 transactions this year, up from 1,217, but with the approach of a general election likely to lead to a house-buying hiatus and land prices registering annual increases of up to 50 per cent the outlook is less than promising.

House broker Panmure Gordon is sticking with its full year pre-tax forecast of £7.7m (£6m), implying a forward p/e ratio of 18 with the shares at 114p, down 1.5p.

That rating leaves little room for error. Unattractive.

Emap profit of £51m puts feud in back seat

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Emap, the media company in the throes of a boardroom bust-up, yesterday took a breather from its management misfortunes to announce sharply higher interim profits of £50.6m, up 34 per cent.

The company also booked a pre-tax profit gain of £113.5m from the sale of its newspaper and printing businesses to Johnston Press, following a £217m deal completed earlier this year. Turnover was ahead 16 per cent at £388.3m.

Several media analysts upgraded their forecasts for the full year, pointing out that the newspaper sale had resulted in a lower tax charge than many had expected. Full-year forecasts range to as high as £118m, or 37p a share.

Insiders conceded that the results were a welcome diversion from a long-simmering boardroom dispute between two renegade independent directors, Joe Cooke and Ken Simmonds, who are to fight the board's plans to fire them at an extraordinary meeting on 2 December.

The company declined to provide further details yesterday of succession plans, which have been widely aired in recent weeks. According to informed sources, Robin Miller, the chief executive, is likely to become non-executive chairman when Sir John Hoskyns stands down. Sir John told analysts yesterday that he was unlikely to do so before 1998.

Mr Miller and the managing director, David Arculus, have had several disagreements over strategy, but sources close to the company insisted last night they were not serious. Mr Arculus is expected to become chief executive if Mr Miller rises to the chairmanship.

The two renegade board di-



Robin Miller: Chief executive is likely to become non-executive chairman when Sir John Hoskyns steps down

rectors have sent letters to all shareholders asking for support against their dismissal. The two argue that the interests of good corporate governance require strong independent representation on the board. Their battle with management flared last summer, when they opposed proposals, approved by shareholders, to reduce the minimum number of board members and disperse with the need to consult shareholders if 75 per cent of board agreed to dismiss directors. Institutional shareholders are widely expected to support management, and agree to dismiss the two men.

The six-month period saw the first results from Tele Star, the French listing magazine, as well as sharply higher returns from commercial radio, following the purchase of the Metro Radio group. Radio profits breached £10m, up 85 per cent year-on-year.

Consumer magazines, one of the group's core businesses, saw operating profits rise 11 per cent to £19.9m, on turnover ahead 8 per cent at £115.6m. Strong advertising growth in the UK, expected to continue into the second half, was the main driver of climbing profits. The French consumer magazine businesses, boosted by the Tele Star acquisition, saw profits soar by 108 per cent to £13.4m.

IN BRIEF

• Fidelity Brokerage Group, the US-owned broking firm banned from taking on new business by the Securities and Futures Authority for three months, has appointed Kenneth Rathgeber acting president. He temporarily replaces David Plucinsky, who was in charge of the broking operation when a new computer system was installed - the root of the problems which caused the SFA ban. Mr Rathgeber was sent to the UK to unravel the problems and will remain until a permanent head is hired. Mr Plucinsky will take on a "special assignment" at FBG.

• The directors of listed companies outside the FTSE 350 are against any increase in the requirements of the Cadbury code on corporate governance, according to a survey published today by Arthur Andersen and Binder Hamlyn, the accountants. Instead, they want the Hampel Committee, which has succeeded the Cadbury Committee, to concentrate on reducing the burden for them. "Our survey showed that the existing Cadbury requirements place a disproportionate burden on non-FTSE 350 companies and that the costs of complying with the code outweigh the benefits," said Clive Reay, a partner specialising in the mid-corporate market.

• Deutsche Morgan Grenfell has been saved from making an outright bid for Synectics, a Norwegian software firm in which Peter Young, the disgraced fund manager, had built up a 47 per cent stake. A holding of over 45 per cent in a company can require an investor to make a bid. But the Oslo Stock Exchange yesterday decided it would not oblige Deutsche to bid for the firm. It will treat the bank's holding - 20.7 per cent by Morgan Grenfell Asset Management and 26.7 per cent by Deutsche - as two separate holdings, even though MGAM is part of Deutsche.

• Scottish Pride Holdings is in advanced talks regarding the sale of its UHT, cheese and butter businesses to Scottish Milk. Scottish Milk said it expected to announce soon that detailed terms had been agreed.

• Rolls-Royce's Rolls-Royce Power Ventures unit has signed a joint venture agreement with Northern Electric Generation, a division of Northern Electric, to develop, own and operate a 50MW natural gas-fired power station at Seal Sands on Teesside. The venture will come on stream in November 1997 and will be called Viking Power. Viking will be owned 50/50 by the two companies.

• United News & Media has sold the South Wales Argus and other newspapers in the Wales division of its regional newspaper unit, United Provincial Newspapers, to Southern Newspapers for £31.5m cash. The proceeds would be used to reduce group debt. United said. UPN Wales reported 1995 operating profits of £1.08m on sales of £15.15m.

• Halifax Building Society has signed a £130m agreement with British Telecom for its new multi-media communications services. The five-year contract makes Halifax the first financial institution in the country to use BT's new ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) service.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
BAA (Q)	742m (138m)	304m (294m)	22.2p (21.5p)	4.5p (4.125p)
British Steel (Q)	3.6bn (3.0bn)	262m (250m)	8.59p (10.25p)	3.0p (2.0p)
Capital Finance (Q)	77.8m (67.3m)	32.1m (29.5m)	29.4p (26.2p)	12.5p
Carr's Milling (Q)	95m (85.5m)	2.63m (2.03m)	31.7p (23.1p)	10.5p (8.5p)
Calsonic (Q)	3.7m (2.5m)	570,000 (211,000)	1.33p (0.95p)	0.15p (0p)
Cleveland Trust (Q)	1.25m (1.75m)	846,000 (606,000)	4p (3.1p)	2.5p (2.45p)
Charles Silvers (Q)	253m (185.4m)	5.7m (3.65m)	8.5p (7.3p)	1.4p (1.3p)
Citibank Group (Q)	23.3m (20m)	3.71m (2.95m)	16p (14.3p)	4p (3.5p)
Emap (Q)	388.3m (334.1m)	164.1m (130.3m)	52.7p (10.6p)	4.3p (3.7p)
John Lewis (Q)	8m (7.5m)	235,000 (182,000)	0.15p (0.12p)	nil
Prowting (Q)	59.2m (50.37m)	2.22m (4.12m)	1.6p (3.3p)	1.9p (1.3p)
Reynold (Q)	91.3m (87.3m)	10.2m (8.1m)	11.0p (9.6p)	2.8p (2.5p)
Sidlaw (Q)	289.8m (283.2m)	-7.3m (-112,000)	-12p (1.7p)	2p (1.1p)
Solid State Supply (Q)	2.45m (2m)	205,000 (105,000)	2.5p (2.7p)	1.0p
Tele Star (Q)	98.33m (87.3m)	6.2m (3.4m)	7p (5.5p)	2.5p
Walker Group (Q)	2.8m (2.5m)	311,000 (205,000)	3.2p (2.2p)	1.25p
Wynneham Press (Q)	27.5m (18.8m)	2.5m (1.97m)	7.1p (5.5p)	1.5p (1.4p)

(Q) - Final (Q) - Interim (M) - Nine months

East Midlands in formal takeover talks

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Directors of East Midlands Electricity were last night preparing for formal discussions about a possible takeover of the company by Dominion Resources, the US utility group.

After days of detailed work on the bid by Dominion's board and advisers from SBC Warburg and US buyout specialists Wasserstein Perella, the Virginia-based power company approached East Midlands yesterday to arrange a meeting.

It is thought the negotiations could take place as early as today. Thomas Capps, Dominion's chairman, was understood to be flying to London to meet for the first time with Sir Nigel Rudd, East Midlands' chairman. Sir Nigel is understood to have made clear that East Midlands will have serious talks about a bid as long as the offer represents a good deal for shareholders.

When the possibility of an approach was revealed last week Dominion said it would not be prepared to pay much more than 608p a share for the Nottingham-based company, valuing it at £1.2bn. However East Midlands is likely to hold out for a price of at least some 650p a share, worth more than £1.3bn.

It was unclear last night whether Dominion was ready to make a formal offer on this scale. A source close to the company said: "There isn't a specific set of parameters at this stage."

There are three possible outcomes from the talks: an agreed takeover bid recommended by East Midlands' board to its shareholders; a hostile bid by Dominion after the failure of the two sides to agree on a price; or

the possibility that the US predator would decide not to bid. Shares in East Midlands surged ahead yesterday, closing up 10p at 603.5p. The share price had been depressed last week by the growing belief among City analysts that a Dominion bid, and the hostile offer already launched by US-controlled CE Electric for Northern Electric, would be blocked by the Government. If both bids succeed, it would leave just three of the 12 privatised regional electricity companies remaining with separate stock market listings.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, is thought to be concerned that this would reduce his ability to make efficiency comparisons based on share price performance. Labour has suggested that if the bids were successful, the Government could insist on keeping a minority of Northern and East Midlands shares trading on the stock market.

John Battle, Labour's energy spokesman, said he was not opposed to electricity takeovers by foreign firms but the regulator had to be certain he could continue to do his job.

Invesco in call for £119m to tie up AIM

Jill Treanor
Banking Correspondent

Invesco yesterday raised £119m via a rights issue to contribute towards the cost of the £1.6bn (£1bn) merger with Texas-based AIM, a deal that will make it one of the world's largest fund management groups.

Most of the merger price will be satisfied by the issue of 290 million Invesco shares to shareholders in AIM. The remaining \$50m is being raised in cash from loans and yesterday's rights issue.

The rights issue will be made by Invesco Funding LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Invesco, on the basis of one unit of convertible unsecured loan stock in Invesco Funding for every 5 existing Invesco ordinary shares.

The units will be converted into new ordinary shares in In-

vesco provided that debt financing commitments have not been terminated.

The merged group, which will be renamed Amvesco, will control £150bn (£91bn) of funds which values the 72 per cent of the mutual fund group held by AIM's founder directors and management at £720m.

Four top executives of AIM, including Ted Bauer, the 77-year-old founder, are to be locked in with four-year fixed-term contracts which will then convert to one-year rolling contracts.

Mr Bauer's stake in AIM is worth about £110m and he will end up with 5 per cent of the merged company.

In total, seven of the AIM directors will together hold a 20 per cent stake in the merged company and they have agreed not to sell their stakes for five years.

Cost of Lloyds bid set to jump for UniChem

Magnus Grimond

UniChem has revealed that its £641m bid for Lloyds Chemicals would cost around £25.4m in fees and other charges. The figure, announced in the offer document sent to Lloyds shareholders over the weekend, covers £14m expended in underwriting offers for Lloyds earlier this year, plus the legal and administrative costs of dealing with the subsequent reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The additional £11.4m is an estimate of the further costs of advisers and stamp duty if the latest bid is successful.

UniChem reiterated its claim that the merger of the businesses would lead to "material earnings enhancement" after the first year. Lord Rippon, the chairman, said annual cost savings would run at over £15m in the first 12 months and in excess of £20m thereafter. The enlarged group would create a UK leader in pharmacy retailing, the distribution of prescription drugs to independent chemists and the wholesaling of veterinary products.

But Gehe, which is mounting a rival £651m bid for Lloyds, countered that gearing would



Lord Rippon: Enlarged group 'creates UK leader'

soar to nearly 490 per cent if the two businesses were put together. The figures were based on UniChem's average debt level of £128m for last year, a spokesman for the German group said, and were before estimated restructuring and certain bid costs. That level of debt will leave the group vulnerable, he claimed.

"We think this is something to be questioned, particularly as at the time of the last rights issue in 1994 [Lloyds] said it wanted to cut gearing, then standing at 36 per cent."

However, in an immediate riposte, Jeffrey Harris, the UniChem chief executive, said Gehe were trotting out all same old themes. "Contrary to all Gehe's earlier protestations of the diminishing value of Lloyds, their bid of £5 underlines the value we have put on the company. We are confident of delivering value to shareholders from the acquisition."

Analysts had been pushing the company to make acquisitions, with other media companies the favoured option. But Mr Eyre said yesterday: "I'm not sure it makes sense for us to invest in television, say. That market is all about programme making and programme acquisition - those are not our skills."

The acquisition won the support of several analysts yesterday. One said: "I think this is an intriguing move, and it makes sense to take the merchandising brand into new markets."

However, Capital's shares fell 16p to 577.5p on the news. Capital and MKT had already entered into a joint venture to develop Capital Radio Café on the ground floor of the radio company's new offices in Leicester Square, London. Additional Radio Cafés are to be launched over the next 12 months.

Comment, page 19

Telekom puts 690m shares on market

Imre Karacs
in Bonn

Overwhelmed by a torrent of orders, the German telephone monopoly Deutsche Telekom announced yesterday that it was putting another 115 million shares on the market next week, raising the total to 690 million and boosting the amount of money raised by 20 per cent to as much as DM20.7bn (£8.4bn).

The company had planned to release 500 million shares, and

reserved the option of a further 75 million "Greenshoe" shares for Europe's biggest privatisation. Despite the fact that the asking price will be at the top of its original range of DM 20-30, the shares have been heavily oversubscribed, by as much as six-fold, according to some reports. Subscriptions for individuals closed last Wednesday, institutions have until Thursday to register, and trading on the world's main financial markets begins on Monday.

"The initial placement of Deutsche Telekom will become a milestone for German stock markets," said Ron Sommer, the company's chairman. "I am convinced that the offering will be a huge success."

Not since the partial privatisation of Volkswagen three decades ago has a flotation attracted so much interest. Some 3 million Germans have registered, doubling the German share-holding population. The success has been large-

ly due to a slick advertising campaign that set out to dispel Germans' innate fears of the vagaries of the Borse. There were also plenty of sweeteners in the offer: a 60-pennig dividend per share at the end of this year, a pledge to double that next year, and guaranteed loyalty shares for every 10 that Germans hold on to for three years. There is also a discount of 50 pfennigs for anybody buying up to 300 shares in this round. Whether ordinary Germans

will keep their shares beyond 1998 is doubtful. That date marks the start of the Big Bang in Europe's telecommunications market, when even Deutsche Telekom, one of the world's least efficient and most expensive companies, will have to start competing with foreign rivals on a level playing field. Shares dipped sharply on the grey market after yesterday's announcement, but they are still trading 10 per cent above the price investors have to pay.



Convergence play leaves Britain out in the cold

Of the many bizarre trends in capital markets right now the strangest of all is the dramatic narrowing of the premium on Italian and Spanish bonds over those of Germany. To put it simply, what has been happening is that the cost of Italian and Spanish government debt has fallen to the extent that for the first time it has moved to within 2 per cent of Germany's. Italy now pays less for its money than Britain. The same is also true of Ireland, Finland and Sweden. Given that Italy and Spain could until recently be characterised, from an economic perspective, not too far adrift from banana republic status, this would seem to be quite a turn-up for the books. But don't worry. It's only partly to do with economic fundamentals. We haven't been overtaken by Spain, Italy and Finland - yet. Rather the reason is to do with EMU. Peripheral bond markets are rising strongly in anticipation of monetary union. If markets believe a country will join EMU, it seems reasonable to align their long term bond yields with those of the lowest denominator - Germany - since after EMU their inflation and currency rates should be the same. In markets, this is known as "the convergence play". The dangers for those who adopt this as an investment strategy are only too apparent. Even Deutsche Bank, which is about as strongly pro-EMU as they come, is warning that any setback in monetary union "could re-

sult in the undoing of recent market trends towards convergence and instead set off a flight to quality". For the moment, however, these dangers are being ignored. Bond prices in Italy and Spain keep moving upwards. Much tougher than expected Italian and Spanish budgets have reinforced the view that these countries are both serious about and capable of joining EMU, if not in the first wave, then certainly in the second.

In part, the convergence phenomenon in bond markets is self-fulfilling for the Maastricht Treaty makes it a condition of EMU membership that nominal long term interest rates converge to within 2 percentage points of the best performing member states. But it is also a reflection of political and economic reality. Because France in particular, and Germany to a limited extent, are also funding the Maastricht conditions as they race towards monetary union, they cannot be as high minded as in the past about the cheating ways of others. The idea of Spain and Italy as early participants in monetary union is as a consequence less of an anathema to Germany than it was. A more relaxed stance on the fudge, together with some real progress on economic convergence, make it highly possible that Spain and Italy will gain entry at an early stage. Britain's position in all this is a mirror image of that of the Southern Europeans. While its politicians continue to talk the language

of the Euro-sceptic, there's little chance of the gilt market getting swept up in the convergence phenomenon - much to the anguish of the Treasury, for according to a recent report by IBCA, the debt rating agency, the beneficial effects on the cost of Government borrowing could be worth as much as 2p off the basic rate of income tax. The economics argue forcibly against it too. On present Treasury forecasts, Britain is not going to meet the 3 per cent Maastricht ceiling on debt as a proportion of GDP next year. If the Bank of England is right in what it said last week about inflation, Britain may not meet the inflation criteria either. So although these trends in international bond markets seem hard to understand from a British perspective, even bizarre, there is a modicum of logic behind them. Britain's wait and see stance on EMU may ultimately prove to have been the right one, but boy is it going to cost us if it turns out to have been wrong.

Capital turns to food

Capital Radio needed to do something to break out of the present hiatus in its development. But whether things are desperate enough to justify going out and buying a chain of theme restaurants is another thing. It smacks of management that

cannot think of anything better to do. We have heard the "synergy" arguments before. Capital is a strong marketing brand. So it should be able to provide ambience, good music, pleasant surroundings and thematic food as well, surely. That was Richard Eyre's argument yesterday, as he unveiled the £51m acquisition of My Kinda Town. There are some sound arguments in favour of the restaurant trade. Britons still eat out less than their counterparts in big Western countries. Moreover, there are no signs yet that the phenomenal growth in spending on out-of-home meals in recent years is abating. But this is not a simple business: tastes change, trends come and go. Furthermore, Capital is buying into one of the trendiest business sectors in town, and paying the consequent top price for the privilege. To be fair, Mr Eyre had to do something. The City was breathing down his neck, wondering, urging him on to bid or be bid for. Unfortunately, this investment isn't going to convince anyone: are those who think Capital Their Kinda Radio Station going to turn to Mr Eyre for Their Kinda Pizza? It looks doubtful.

Harrogate and the single currency

Harrogate's outlandish and expensive conference centre has, despite its size,

always encouraged a feeling of claustrophobia and when hundreds of company executives are stuffed together into its confined spaces and maze of walkways, it is no surprise that tempers get a little frayed. Little more than eight hours into what was fast turning into a political circus yesterday the delegates could be forgiven for feeling like soft toys pulled around by a pack of ravenous terriers. Michael Portillo, Michael Heseltine, Gordon Brown - the CBI conference this year seems more like political hustings than a business conference.

The overwhelming impression was of any attempt at serious and much needed commercial discussion put on hold until after the election. One frustrated delegate who will remain nameless summed the proceedings up thus: "Most CBI people would rather politicians said what they stand for than use the conference to slag off their opponents."

Others complained of inability to plan when so many of the important decisions have yet to be taken.

On the single currency, for example, both main parties are undecided. Not that this does any more than reflect deep divisions within the CBI's own membership. The CBI itself is sitting on the fence on this vital issue for fear of being engulfed by a tidal wave of political flak. With that kind of leadership, it is no wonder many businesses feel rudderless.

Higher rates fears as raw materials costs jump

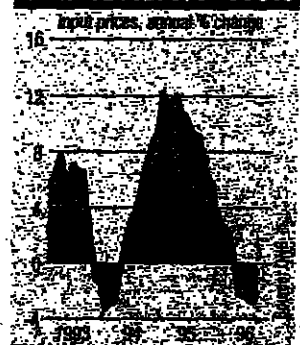
Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

A jump in the cost of raw materials last month due to higher oil prices left the financial markets on edge about the risk of another increase in interest rates. Although underlying inflation at the factory gate remained at its lowest for 29 years, yesterday's figures were not quite as favourable as expected.

Inflation figures due on Thursday are expected to show that the target measure climbed above 3 per cent last month, pushed higher by petrol prices. By last night's close the financial markets were betting that base rates will be a full percentage point higher at 7 per cent by June.

The latest survey of the high

Manufacturers' costs



street by the British Retail Consortium, published this morning, will provide some reassurance, about inflation prospects. It shows that retail sales growth picked up in October, but the BRC said it did not add up to a runaway boom.

Andrew Higginson, chairman of the economic affairs committee, said: "Whilst retailers are encouraged by this good performance, there is no sign of the 1980s-style boom that some commentators are talking up."

The prices manufacturers paid for raw materials and fuel rose by 0.5 per cent in October. It took the year-on-year rate of decline up to minus 2 per cent. The increase during the month was entirely due to rising crude oil prices, which were 45 per cent higher than a year earlier. This also helped take prices charged at the factory gate up by 0.2 per cent during the month, although there were smaller increases in the prices of tobacco, textiles, chemicals, and a range of machinery and equipment. The annual rate of

output price inflation edged up to 2.3 per cent.

Even so, "core" producer output prices, excluding food, drink, tobacco and energy, rose by only 0.9 per cent in the 12 months to October, matching the previous month's low.

The fact that the oil price was mainly to blame for last month's increases reassured some analysts. "Inflationary pressures are otherwise very weak," said Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe.

Others were more concerned. "The producer price figures are still incredibly good but they are not going to get any better," said Robert Barrie at BZW.

The BRC's survey, published in advance of official figures, showed that retail sales grew 5.9 per cent in value in the year to

October. This was higher than September's 5.2 per cent but a shade under the August-October average of 6 per cent.

The report said there had been an encouraging start to Christmas trading. Sales growth remained strong in areas related to the housing market, especially furniture and carpets where gains were described as "excellent". Sales of personal computers were also stellar.

Separate figures on the number of insolvencies from accountancy firm Deloitte & Touche showed that this year looks likely to see the lowest number of appointments to receiverships and administration orders since 1989.

The total in the 10 months to October was 1,387, compared with 2,013 in all of 1995, and 1,507 in 1989.

Maxted heads enlarged Chesterfield group

Nigel Cope

Robert Maxted emerged as head of Chesterfield Properties yesterday when the company paid £21.9m for Albion, his privately held property company and installed him as chief executive of the enlarged group.

The deal does not represent a large windfall gain for Mr Maxted who built up Pillar Properties, as he owns just 3 per cent of the company. The bulk of the shares are held by Legal & General, Burford Holdings and Mercury Asset Management.

Roger Wingate, whose father founded Chesterfield, will remain as executive chairman. There is widespread speculation that Mr Maxted's arrival signals a shake-up of Chesterfield's assets which include the Curzon chain of London cinemas and several West End theatres including Wyndhams. Some of Albion's assets may

also be sold. Mr Maxted said: "The property market has segmented into those companies that are active players and those that are not due to balance sheet constraints. This deal gives Albion access to the capital markets. The strategy is to become more opportunistic."

It is likely that new develop-

ments will form part of the strategy. Albion, which was founded a year ago today, has a property portfolio valued at £110m, including 28 properties such as Tricorn House, an office development in Birmingham. Its net annual income is £11.4m.

Chesterfield is paying for the acquisition through the issue of 4 million new shares at 545p and 2 million warrants at a subscription price of 700p.

Mr Maxted's arrival at Chesterfield is certain to herald a new era of dynamism at Chesterfield which has been regarded as a sleepy player with £300m of assets. The news was greeted positively in the City where Chesterfield shares soared 41.5p to 544p.



Staying on: Roger Wingate is executive chairman

Resort Hotels boss in court

Shareholders of the mainly three-star Resort Hotels group were "misled" into parting with £20.6m because of the forgeries and false statements by Robert Feld, the company's chief executive, a jury heard yesterday.

"Within about two years the company was in receivership and the shares were valueless," said Mr Anthony Evans QC, prosecuting at Middlessex Crown Court.

Mr Feld, 43, of Aubrey House, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex, denies three charges of making misleading statements to shareholders and 13 of using false instruments in 1992.

Mr Feld went into the family business, which ran the Norfolk Hotel on Brighton's seafront, after leaving university. He later formed Norfolk Resort Hotels which acquired the business and assets of the family partnership and of another business he and his sister had started in 1980, the court heard.

He changed the company's name to Resort Hotels in 1985 and the business was quickly expanded, partly by managing hotels for other companies in return for a fee. The group went public in 1988 and continued its expansion programme with the help of millions of pounds raised by substantial bank loans, the issue of debenture loan stock and by rights issues.

Eventually it had 55 properties, 3,000 hotel rooms and employed 600 staff.

"Robert Feld was the driving force behind the business," said Mr Evans. "He was Resort Hotels."

The lies and forgeries he allegedly told were in respect of a £20.6m rights issue in 1992. Shareholders were induced to part with £20.6m, Mr Evans said.

The rights were the fourth in as many years. Including the issue of some debentures in 1991, the company raised in excess of £50m.

The hearing was adjourned until today.



Sir John Egan, chief executive of BAA (pictured, foreground, with Barry Gibson, retail director), expressed confidence yesterday that the airport operator would not be included in any Labour windfall tax on the privatised utilities. He said the company had received "no indication that it would be included". Pointing to the company's negative cashflow, he asked:

"How can such a business afford to pay more when it is at an absolute maximum of negative cashflow?" Earlier reports had suggested that BAA might have to pay up to £500m under Labour's plans. Sir John was speaking as BAA reported a 3.4 per cent increase in half-year pre-tax profits to £304m. Passenger traffic rose by 3.3 per cent in the period. Photograph: Philip Meach

G10 woos emerging countries

Jim Treanor
Banking Correspondent

Central bankers from the leading industrial countries will meet regularly with their counterparts in emerging countries to increase co-operation and establish standards for banking supervision world-wide.

The decision was confirmed yesterday at a regular monthly meeting of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) of the Group of Ten (G10) central bankers in Basel, Switzerland. It follows months of discussions about how to strengthen banking systems in emerging countries following Mexico's financial crisis in late 1994.

"It's an important move. We are reaching out to world-wide supervisors to get effective supervision," a source at the BIS said.

Earlier this year the BIS decided to extend membership to the central banks of nine countries: Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Singapore. The decision is part of a broader move by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to give a greater say to the world's new economic powers.

Hans Tietmeyer, chairman of the G10 central bank governors' committee and president of the Bundesbank, said after the meeting yesterday that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was interested in fostering co-operation between the BIS Committee on Banking Supervision and the representatives from emerging countries.

"I hope in the end they will elaborate some guidelines for supervision. On one hand for the industrial countries and also for emerging countries," Mr Tietmeyer said.

Recommendations by the BIS Committee, made up of supervisors from the G10 and Luxembourg, tend to form standards for banking practice globally and the G10 hopes to make its work more accessible to non-G10 supervisors.

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BUSINESS TRAVEL

Tips on how to Lounge around

Ask business travellers waiting in a crowded departure lounge at Heathrow what has been the most irritating change in recent years, and many will mention the changes to eligibility rules for British Airways' Executive Club. The airline decided that frequent travellers who use cheaper tickets should no longer qualify for Silver and Gold levels, and so lose access to airport lounges; that's why many business travellers find themselves stuck with the crowds.

Yet rather than sitting and fuming in the shopping mall that passes for an airport lounge these days, there are solutions to the unwelcome new status of an unwelcome passenger. Airport lounges are opening up on a pay-per-visit basis, and at the London's main airports a nominal investment will buy you a little quiet solitude before the flight – even if you are travelling on a charter flight.

One particularly accessible such lounge is at the south terminal at Gatwick. Wedged between gates 12 and 14 is the Premier Lounge, operated by Air Navigation Services. For £10, including VAT, travellers can relax in a compact but comfortable lounge which has everything from fax facilities to a good view of the runway. It opens daily between 6am and 10pm.

If full-farepaying passengers in the Servisair Lounges at Gatwick have noticed a few more customers than usual, it might be that they are holiday-makers heading for the sun. The Sovereign brochure from First Choice offers package tourists welcome respite in the lounge for a fee of around £12. Since check-in times for charter flights are typically two hours ahead of departure, there is plenty of time to enjoy the free facilities.

The idea seems to be working, judging by the way the scheme has been extended to cover many more airports at home and abroad.

Pressure on space at Heathrow means the budget business traveller's task at Britain's busiest airport is tougher. Best advice for passengers is to arrive and depart by air, thus making use of the "Comfort and Care" level at Heathrow's giant new Flight Connections Centre. It has an inner sanctum – the Rest and Relaxation area – and is operated by Thomas Cook. For a nominal sum, you can shower, sooze or study in calm.

For Heathrow-originating passengers, Thomas Cook also operates a business centre in the Queen's Building.

'A nominal investment will buy you a little quiet solitude before the flight'

For an annual corporate fee of £495 you can qualify for reduced-price facilities at the centre, plus use of a lounge. This could be good news for travellers using terminals one and two, because the centre is placed neatly between them (though inconveniently "landside" rather than after security and passport control).

The economy class passenger who finds him or herself flying on Swissair will look forward to the transfer at Zurich, too. The Swiss carrier invites economy passengers to visit the airport lounge for a "nominal" sum (though given the strength of the local currency, this could still dent your wallet). It is to be hoped that more airlines will acknowledge that business travellers use economy tickets, too, and appreciate the peace, and productive potential that only an executive lounge can offer.

Premier Lounge, Gatwick: 01293 568306.
Heathrow Business Centre: 0181-759 2434.

You have never had it so good

Simon Calder explains why increased competition is good news for the customer



Business travellers are nowadays used to being pampered in opulent surroundings such as those at Abu Dhabi Airport

Photograph: Emma Boam

A week ago, British Airways had a Bad Air Day across the Atlantic. Not the baggage handling dispute that left at least 4,000 items of luggage at Heathrow Terminal 4 rather than accompanying their owners, nor intense lobbying against its proposed link with American Airlines. Instead, it was an engine problem with an eastbound Concorde that caused embarrassment for BA staff. Yet the episode served to underline how much the airline industry is driven by the need to cater for business travellers these days.

Passengers on the afternoon Concorde flight from New York had just passed the speed of sound when the supersonic plane was forced to return to Kennedy airport. The fault could not immediately be rectified, so space was sought on subsonic flights for the 100 inconvenienced passengers. But bookings were so heavy in First Class that the frustrated supersonic travellers were faced with a choice of squeezing into Club World or waiting for space in First on the last flight of the day.

The point is that business travel is replicating the feel-good factor and real-good numbers that tell of economic buoyancy in the Western world. Conventional wisdom says that if you can fill the premium cabins on a transatlantic jet, then you break even on the flight – anything you gain from the economy cabin provides pure profit. The wounds caused by the Gulf War have finally healed, and business travel suppliers are looking eagerly at the executive to restore full health to balance sheets.

This is why almost every index of business travel costs is rising. Eurostar trains from London Waterloo to Paris and Brussels have put 30 per cent on first class fares since the service was launched two years ago. A squeeze on quality hotel beds means, according to Hogg Robinson BTL, that rates have recovered to peak 1980s levels; £50 is now a figure to be scoffed at, rather than a sum that a proficient agent could negotiate down to for a single hotel room-night.

The American Express index of air fares shows the cost of business class flights increasing significantly in the third quarter

of 1996 – an inevitable phenomenon as airlines seek to capitalise on higher demand to compensate for a succession of dismal years.

Yet suppliers are not getting away with simply racking up prices. In an intensely competitive market, any serious enterprise has to offer value-for-money. This may be represented by a genuinely 24-hour service from a business travel agent in return for a negotiated contract fee. Or it could be provided by a hotel room that is properly equipped to meet the demands of an executive who does not possess a degree in electronic engineering and a soldering iron – but does need to contact head office digitally.

Anyone caught in the commercial uncertainties of the late 1990s hesitates to quote Harold Macmillan's: "You've never had it so good". Yet as far as the business traveller is concerned, there is a substantial amount of truth in the saying. As the round of improvements in intercontinental air travel draws to a close, executives are stretching their legs to take advantage of the 50-60 inches of seat pitch that have become the norm in business class, before waking up with a hot shower in the arrivals lounge and then heading for the free limousine transfer.

Now the battle has begun on short-haul routes. A dozen European airlines are busily expanding comfort and reducing hassle for premium passengers on short hops – not least because increasingly many city pairs have an alternative high-speed rail link. Under Richard Branson's sphere of influence, Eurostar is making

serious moves for meeting the business traveller's needs rather than merely waiting for customers to show up. But the news last week that overnight services from provincial cities to the Continent have been postponed for yet another year gives the airlines another chance to create a winning route network from airports outside London.

There is no significant evidence so far that executives in Exeter or Edinburgh are taking advantage of telecommuting to avoid travelling altogether. Indeed, information technology seems to have more of a role as a tool of the traveller – enabling easy contact with base – than as a reason to stay home. Leading business travel agencies say they predicted this all along, and point to the example of the tele-

phone. When this instrument of communication was invented, it actually stimulated travel.

Some comfort, then, for travel agents under pressure from suppliers wanting to cut commissions and clients who want to book direct and make the most of electronic distribution systems. No-one expects the next few years to be easy for agents, but the winners are likely to be those who turn these threats into opportunities – negotiating "management fee" arrangements that make commission levels irrelevant, and putting customers on-line to a database of deals that reflect the agent's buying muscle.

If the business travel industry can perceive a dark cloud, it is probably the one hovering over Luton. As thousands of executives have found in the past year,

the no-fuss, no-frills service offered by EasyJet can actually make journeys smoother as well as cheaper. While company accountants are smirking at the savings on flights to Amsterdam or Barcelona, the traveller is finding that ticketless travel reduces one element of stress from a journey – and that being able to park a car about 100 yards from the aircraft is a benefit worth at least as much as an executive lounge or a handful of Air Miles.

The remainder of the Millennium will see a still more fierce battle for the hearts, minds and frequent flyer loyalties of travelling executives. And as experts in the travel industry over the next few years, has shown, the business traveller is he or she can find room at the front of the plane.

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Continental Airlines



Merger will not stifle competition

What would a BA/AA tie-up mean for New York travellers? Richard Quest reports

This week British Airways begins a new offer on the East coast of America weekend Breaks to Britain for just \$289. At prevailing exchange rates that is around £176. A first class sleeper return to Glasgow on British Rail costs £226. Why is BA offering such generosity? Because it is in hot competition for business across the Atlantic, and the principal competitor is American Airlines. Ask your travel agent to book you from London to New York and you will probably end up on aircraft of one or the other. End up, because out of an average 23 daily flights between the cities six airports 13 are run by British Airways or American.

Both in the morning and at night, between them they depart half an hour apart. In competition with each other they have effectively built a transatlantic Shuttle service. In terms of westbound traffic from London, it means throughout the working day there's always one or other ready to leave. And that does not include the others on the route: a collection of airlines who have to resort on more than frequency to attract custom.



When worlds collide: The British Airways and American Airlines merger is not unfettered

Air India, Kuwait Airways and El Al use London as a stop over and fill empty seats by deeply discounting tickets in the London bucket shops.

None of the other carriers has devoted the same resources as BA or American to London – New York, to create the same critical mass. So the legitimate question is: if they team up what happens to the fierce competition? Which is why the Global

Alliance needs the utmost scrutiny.

An unfettered merger would clearly be a traveller's nightmare. Luckily that is not what is being proposed. The offer instead is Open Skies. Heathrow, the airport preferred by 80 per cent of customers, would be opened up to all comers. Slots could be bought and sold. All and sundry could fly from Britain to America. But

opening up LHR will require a great deal of care.

You do not sweep away decades of Treaty regulation overnight – not if you want to create true competition. For the authorities in Washington, London and Brussels now looking at the Alliance the trick is to ensure true competition is not stifled by the creation of a new BA – Behemoth Airlines. American Airlines is a master

at running extra 767 flights to mop up any demand and then off other business. So any restrictions probably involve slot confiscation at Heathrow for BA – another hotly contested issue, but one that is probably the price the airline will have to pay to tie up with American.

As the new market opens up encouraging nascent competition will be paramount. It will be the equivalent of holding the tiger by the tail while the prey grows up. Already Continental has fled to fly six times a day to Heathrow. Virgin waits with its wings. The answer seems to be grant these requests and give BA/AA Alliance real heavy weight competition. Not obscure flights, like El Al's narrow bodied 757 from Stansted to Newark every Friday. No business traveller would willingly choose that.

Instead, the executive should hope that more carriers are encouraged to cross the Atlantic to Heathrow, pick up passengers, and fly them to hard country destinations (another hotly contested issue). Filling the Atlantic promises to become more important, not less. If BA wishes to team up with American and believes that is necessary to compete in global markets then the price must be high because of the enormous resources that American brings to bear.

For regular Transatlantic travellers the prospect of the worlds giant airline alliances doing battle for business is glorious. The hope is that in the end, flying from London to New York will always be as cheap as going to Glasgow.

Richard Quest is BBC Correspondent in New York who crosses the Atlantic an average of 30 times a year.

It's not just stocks and shares that go up and down in The City.



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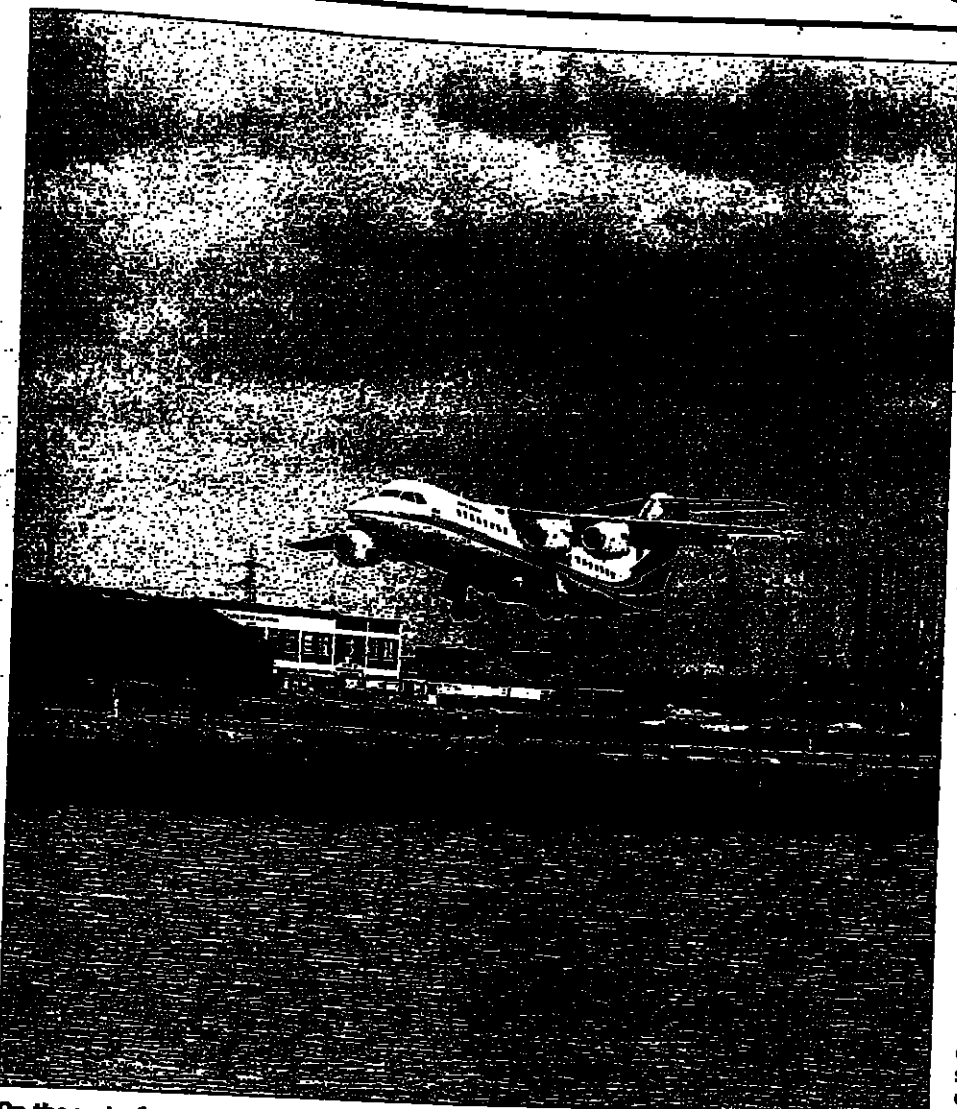
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BUSINESS TRAVEL

23

Docklands no longer badlands

London City is leading the battle against the major airports to secure the custom of the commercial wayfarer. Simon Calder reports



On the waterfront: City Airport in London's Docklands

Photograph: Gerald Lewis

How many times have you been in the position I found myself last Monday: touching down 30 minutes late at Heathrow because of air traffic control congestion, then waiting a further half-hour for the baggage to catch up? The contrast with my journey yesterday was marked: I arrived in London on time, and within 20 minutes was in the office.

The secret, as you may well have guessed, is that I flew into London City airport. Since the Docklands airport opened a decade ago, no-one has denied its convenience. But only this year has it acquired the momentum of a route network necessary to sustain itself and ease the burden of the business traveller.

When London City first opened, you could travel to just two destinations in one kind of aircraft. Paris and Amsterdam were on offer, using Dash-7 propeller aircraft. Even the best inflight service could not disguise the fact that these were small, slow and noisy. New routes came and went, but London City proved a financial drain on the resources of its backers.

The turning point took place one Sunday morning in the summer of 1988, when a well-executed air show demonstrated that jet aircraft could use the Docklands airport without deaf-

ening local residents. Soon British Aerospace 146s were flying from London City, boosting speed, comfort, and appeal to business travellers.

Yet still the balance sheet remained stained deeply red. To appeal to business travellers, an airport needs both length and breadth: a long list of possible destinations, and a wide range of departures to each. Only this year has the critical mass finally been attained.

Two main forces have been at work, both of them resulting from developments at London's big two airports. The first is increasing congestion at Heathrow, which has led smaller niche airlines to see opportunities at an airport only half the distance from the Bank Of England compared with Heathrow. Accordingly, the Belgian carrier VLM and CityJet (now divorced from Virgin Atlantic) have forged links to Antwerp, Rotterdam, Düsseldorf and Dublin.

The other impact has come from British Airways, which has yet to offer any services from London City. BA has, however, introduced flights from Gatwick

to Edinburgh in competition with Air UK. The smaller operator felt the route was unable to sustain such intense competition, so moved its Edinburgh established a base, Air UK has also introduced services to Amsterdam and Rotterdam, complementing those from its Stansted HQ. Suddenly London City has become significant in aviation.

The journey is still not entirely smooth. World Airlines, which started up its only route from City to Amsterdam, has withdrawn the service. And my own subjective survey of the shuttle buses linking the Docklands airport with Canary Wharf and Liverpool Street station reveals most still running mostly empty. But once the Jubilee Line extension provides better transportation to the east of London, City airport can expect to mature still further.

It could face competition from an unexpected source, though. The most mocked airport in Britain is suddenly a serious contender in aviation. You can still, like Lorraine Chase, be walled to paradise

from Luton airport. But now you can also reach Scotland's three largest cities and a range of European capitals from Copenhagen to Madrid.

When EasyJet began flying from Luton to Glasgow and Edinburgh a year ago, everyone thought that its £29 (plus £5 tax) fares would appeal strictly to leisure travellers. The inflight service can most politely be compared with London's commuter trains, but with fares undercutting the competition so fiercely about one in three of its passengers are business travellers. Another reason could be the supreme ease of ticketless travel that the airline pioneered in the UK – once you've tried it, you become a convert, which could be why BA has picked up on the concept for domestic flights.

As the EasyJet network has expanded to Amsterdam, Barcelona and Nice, a new competitor has emerged. Luton-based Debonair aims squarely for the business traveller, on a route network that extends from Newcastle to Rome. It offers high-quality inflight service using BAe 146 equip-

ment, and is chasing intra-European business too. At last, Luton is being taken seriously as a scheduled airport.

The third contender has some catching up to do, but is set to double its route network in January. To find Biggin Hill International Airport amid the leafy downland southeast of London, just look out for Keston Cattery: the airfield is next on the left. Nearby, too, is the M25, which means Biggin Hill has quite a sizeable catchment area. Furthermore, it boasts a door-to-plane distance of just 20 yards, with a possible stop for beans on toast at the café. All Biggin Hill needs now is some scheduled routes.

The only service at present links the Kent airport with Le Touquet, and is mostly filled with canoodling couples: the airline is called Love Air. But from next year, Bright Air plans three daily flights between Biggin Hill and Rotterdam, offering a premium business class product – leather seats and all – on 12-passenger Bandeirante aircraft. The airport may wish to acquire a new slogan: "The future's Bright – the future's Biggin Hill". Maybe not.

Biggin Hill airport: 01959 571111
London City airport: 0171 474 5555
Luton airport: 01582 405100

Nightmare of getting to do an 'e'

Hotel room: somewhere to sleep? Think again. Think temporary workstation. Sue Wheat reports

On your next business trip, you might want to go surfing, or you may want to do an 'e'. An e-mail that is. But finding out whether you will be able to communicate electronically from your hotel can be a real challenge, even in today's world of purpose-built hotel business centres.

As the technological age moves in, hotel business centres it seems, are moving out. Like gyms and other "extra" facilities, many executives insist on them when booking but are more likely to end up working in their room.

"The ideal room," says Mike Platt, Director of Commercial Affairs at Hogg Robinson Business Travel International, "has a good desk, a facility for your PC, a fax machine, an e-mail line and a phone line. Oh – and good lighting, you know how most rooms have such low lighting you can hardly find your way around let alone get any work done."

But the standard of in-room office facilities, electronic or otherwise, is "patchy" at the moment, says Mr Platt, who gives hotels in the US and Far East a mark of eight out of 10 for their performance and in the UK a mere five out of 10.

So, what if you are going to somewhere more unusual than New York City or Tokyo – how are you catered for? "With great difficulty," is Mr Platt's reply, "you have to be more innovative – take your lap-top and a power converter with you and persuade a local, friendly business colleague to let you use their office facilities."

If this is not possible, then finding out for yourself what business facilities even the luxury hotels have can be tricky, however.

Posing the question to Hilton international reservations led to a series of telephone calls around Hilton's many departments – Conference and Business, Head Office, Marketing, and someone's voice mail. I gave up.

Getting a specialised business travel agent to find out was a more fruitful and less time-consuming method. Faced with the challenge of finding me a hotel in Bristol, Boston, Bulgaria and Botswana to suit a workaholic business traveller's needs, Hogg Robinson found me hotels with business centres and in-room communications facilities in three of the destinations – Bristol, Boston, and Bulgaria. Botswana was the only place where logging on could be a problem.

"Most international hotel chains are providing these facilities, including the Hilton, Intercontinental, Hyatt and Swissotel," says Jean Hopkins, Gray Dawes Travel's Hotels Division Manager. "A good example of a business-tailored room is the provision of a unique fax number on check-in that will not be used (at least for a long time) after you check out, thus ensuring that no important faxes go astray."

But if you do find your perfect room-cum-office, sending an e-mail can also be more difficult than it sounds. It's easy enough to plug your lap-top into the room's telephone line, but how does your computer's automatic dial get through the switchboard?

One secret, say globetrotting veterans, is to put a comma after the outside line digit, but before the access number. You should also look on-line for the local access number of your server in the destination you'll be going to before you leave – if you wait until you get there you will end up having to make an international call to log on.

For those who still have a preference for holding face-to-face meetings – rather than communicating over cyberspace – the answer may lie in video conferencing. If you are staying in New York, the Millennium Broadway Hotel can link you up with colleagues at the office – as long as they've got video conferencing too. If not, they can "meet" with you via one of the UK's six major Copthorne Hotels in London, Birmingham, Manchester or Glasgow (£500 for a day's hotel-to-hotel video conference plus call charges), which have a video conferencing facility on trial for six months.

Such state-of-the-art communications are definitely the exception rather than the rule in the UK though. In the middle and low range hotels, we fall dismally in comparison to the States. Holiday Inn, for instance, have five-star Crown Plaza hotels with business centres and in-room communications facilities for around £100 in the UK, but don't have many of the equivalent of the four star 'Full Service' business hotels that can be found all over the States.

So when travelling at home perhaps it's easier to go back to less hi-tech work methods. The Forte Post House in Bristol informed me that electronic communication from the hotel wasn't really possible, but I could have a study-bedroom for £79 a night with someone on call to type and send my faxes. Now that's a thought.

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Dubai team bolt in from the blue

The turf season of 1996 was pulled into its terminus yesterday when Fomka was successful in the Folkestone's finale under blueness skies. Another colour, blue, has dominated the main body of the campaign, however.

It probably dispels the old boy network purists that the electric colour of Godolphin Racing have been in evidence at racing's great moments this year. The damn interlopers have come from a warm winter nestling in the Arabian gulf to knock our boys into touch. The quintessential gentleman trainer, Henry Cecil, was usurped at the last in the championship by some cad who used to be a policeman in dusty Dubai.

Saeed Bin Suroor, and the plump entourage that forms a gaggle wherever he goes, were, of course, blessed with animals of no little talent at the season's outset. The statistics show, however, that these horses were not just vehicles benefiting from a sunny start to their year, they ran consistently throughout the whole season. Godolphin have won £3m in prize money this year, eight Group Ones, including prizes in Hong Kong and Japan, and their domestic record shows a £70 profit to a £1 level stake. They are quite pleased by this.

"We've had a 30 per cent strike-rate and 50 per cent of runners finishing either first or second and that pays testimony to the team," Simon Crisford, the Godolphin racing manager,

Richard Edmondson highlights the key moments from the 1996 Flat season

said. "We've had a great season this year and Saeed has been well supported in his job, particularly by Tom Albertrani [the former assistant to Cecil's trainer, Bill Mott], who has been an invaluable asset to the team. Let's hope Father Christmas brings us some good horses for next year."

The vital passage for Team Godolphin came when Medaaly won the Racing Post Trophy at Doncaster. Few of the boys in blue were there to witness the occasion though. The chief players, including the man on the highest cushion, Sheikh Mohammed, listened to the race by way of telephone commentary in the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Toronto while attending the Breeders' Cup series.

The North Americans, for once, allowed Britain to take something home from their annual jamboree, and for those who like to think of life as one great big *Millie & Boon* story, it was pleasantly reassuring that the rider of our winner, Pilsudski, should be Walter Robert John Swinburn. Just nine months earlier Swinburn had been carried not in glory, but in a coffin following a racing accident in Hong Kong that came unpleasantly close to taking his life.

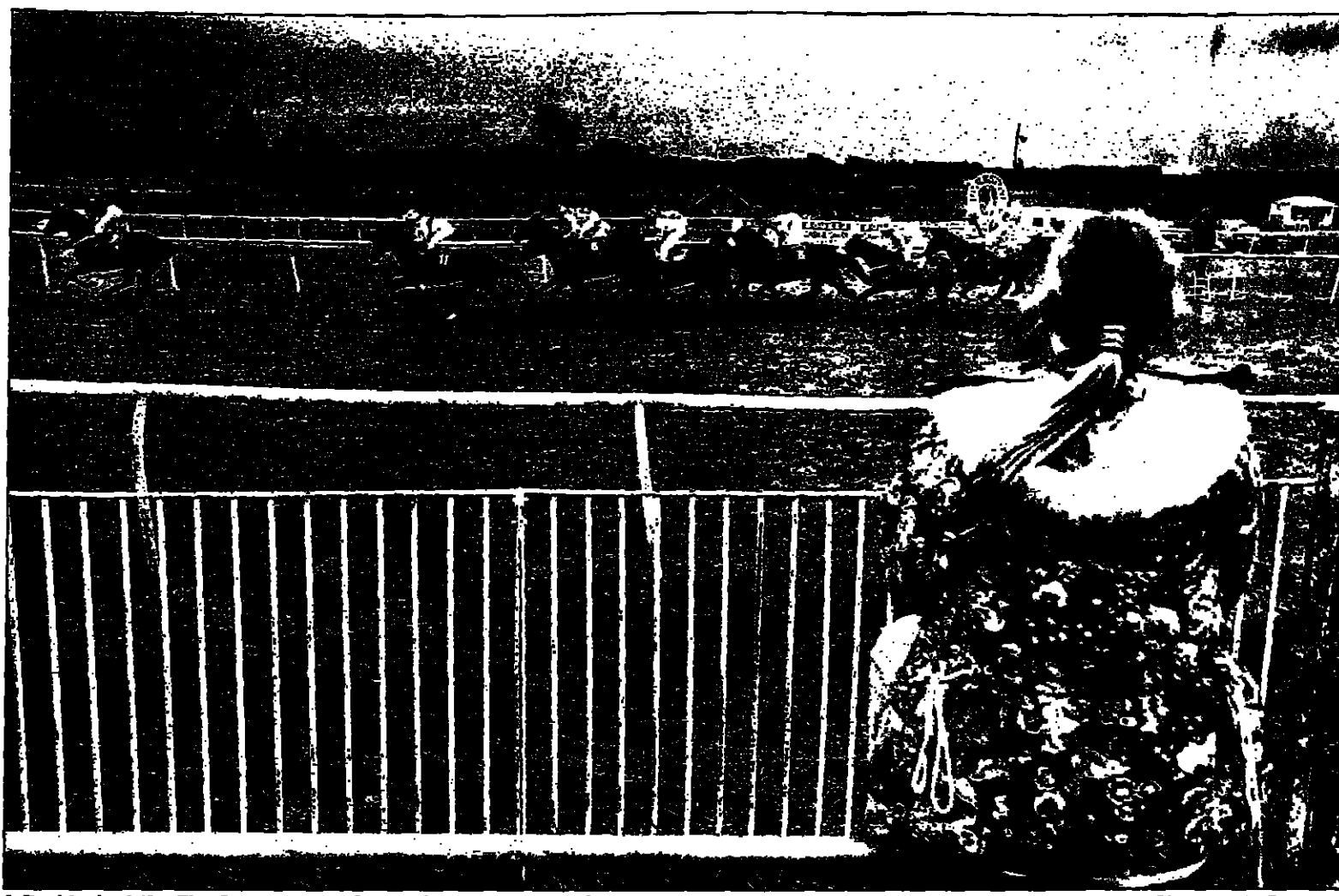
For Willie Carson, too, the memories of the year will include bruising episodes. A

crucial appearance in the Scott's liver when he was kicked by Meshed in the Newbury paddock, but Willie is not about to let anything as trivial as a near-death experience force him out of the saddle. He will be back, pumping, when the stalls open at Doncaster next spring.

The jockey sitting on the tallest pile of winning figures at the end of the season is Pat Eddery, whose achievement in collecting an 11th championship to equal Lester Piggott's record would normally have had the sirens blaring throughout the sport. This draining and enduring feat was surpassed in most people's minds by the happenings of a single autumn day in Berkshire, however.

On 28 September Frankie Dettori started riding winners at Ascot and never stopped, collecting seven straight victories and a permanent place in racing's history. In a game suffering from serious financial malnutrition, the Italian continues to prove he is the sole figure with the capacity to attract new faces, and new money, to the sport.

Good horses also attract interest to the turf, and winter will not seem as long with the knowledge that the brilliant Bosra Sham, winner of the 1,000 Guineas and Champion Stakes,



A final look at the Flat for one young fan as the season on turf concludes at Folkestone yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

will attempt to show how good he is without the impediment of hoof problems in 1997. What is desperately needed, though, is for a lot of some consequence to emerge as the Derby winner. Lamartina apart, it is a long time since the Blue Riband victor went on to achieve anything of great note. Shaamit, this year's champion at Epsom, recently became the first Derby

winner to be boxed to the National Stud since Mill Reef. Unlike his predecessors, many of whom are ensconced in the land of sushi and bullet trains, Shaamit will now be available to British breeders. The sobering truth, however, is that the Japanese, having examined his form, did not really want him.

Shaamit's owner, Khalifa Dasmal, has done rather well for a man whose previous distinctions were to own the biggest car washes in Dubai. But then he is a friend of Sheikh Mohammed, and the year of 1996 taught us that when it comes to influence and power there is no better man with which to be involved.

Challenger for Hennessy

The Hennessy Gold Cup and Hennessy Gold Cup double could be on the cards for Challenger Du Luc, who heads the betting for Saturday's race along with Big Matt.

"We will have to see what happens on Saturday, but I think he will stay the Hennessy trip, he jumps well and goes on any ground," Pipe said.

Out of the Hennessy, though, is Jenny Pitman's Sun Alliance Chase winner, Nahtien Lou,

"The race comes too quickly and he won't be ready in time," Mrs

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Darakshan
(Ludlow 3.10)
NB: Fichu
(Ludlow 1.40)

Pitman said. "I would like to get him to the King George and then he will find his way to the Gold Cup. That is his target."

RACING'S FUTURES MARKET

Bookmakers' ante-post lists are racing's futures market. Readers can catch up with the latest developments - best prices are in bold - in this sphere with *The Independent's* Tuesday service.

Murphy's Handicap Chase (2m 4f 110yds)				
Horse (Trainer)	Weight	Form	Winning Time	Yield
Big Matt (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
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Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1

Hennessy Gold Cup Handicap Chase (3m 2f 110yds)				
Horse (Trainer)	Weight	Form	Winning Time	Yield
Big Matt (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
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Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1
Challenger Du Luc (M Henderson)	11-2	5-1	11-2	5-1

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STOCKS

LEADING TRAINEES WITH RIDDERS: J. Bailey - 17 winners from 60 runners gives a success ratio of 28.3% and a profit to a £1 stake of \$11.74; **M Pipe** - 17 winners, 67 runners, 24.4%, +\$8.31; **M S. Ralston** - 9 winners, 68 runners, 13.2%, +\$4.05; **W. J. Jones** - 35 runners, 26.7%, +\$1.76; **W. J. Jones** - 35 runners, 26.7%, +\$1.76.

LEADING JOCKEYS: **S. Dwyer** - 30 winners, 133 rides, 31.7%, +\$22.35; **A. Minge** - 18 winners, 89 rides, 18.2%, -£32.72; **N. Whitham** - 11 winners, 82 rides, 17.7%, +\$16.73; **S. Bailey** - 16 winners, 82 rides, 19.5%, +\$16.73.

PLANNED FIRST TIME: **St. Francis** (2.10), **Long Distance Sky** (3.40).

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: **NO**. **FATHER-DANCE** (Lover of The West) (3.40) has been sent 195 miles by J. J. O'Neill from Shelton Wood St. 2m.

1.10 **NORTON MANDE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000** added 2m. 2m. 5f. 11yds Penalty Value \$2,332

1	4	CYPRIATES (M) M. J. Parnis 5.1 5.1	M. Minton
2	23-24	FERNS (F) (M) O. Shawood 5.1 5.1	O. Shawood
3	6-9	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
4	10-13	DEPOSED (F) W. J. Jones 5.1 5.1	W. J. Jones
5	14-17	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
6	18-21	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
7	22-25	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
8	26-29	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
9	30-33	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
10	34-37	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
11	38-41	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
12	42-45	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
13	46-49	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
14	50-53	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
15	54-57	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
16	58-61	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
17	62-65	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
18	66-69	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
19	70-73	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
20	74-77	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
21	78-81	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
22	82-85	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
23	86-89	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
24	90-93	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
25	94-97	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
26	98-101	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
27	102-105	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
28	106-109	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
29	110-113	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
30	114-117	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
31	118-121	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
32	122-125	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
33	126-129	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
34	130-133	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
35	134-137	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
36	138-141	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
37	142-145	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
38	146-149	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
39	150-153	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
40	154-157	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
41	158-161	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
42	162-165	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
43	166-169	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
44	170-173	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
45	174-177	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
46	178-181	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
47	182-185	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
48	186-189	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
49	190-193	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
50	194-197	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
51	198-201	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
52	202-205	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
53	206-209	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
54	210-213	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
55	214-217	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
56	218-221	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
57	222-225	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
58	226-229	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
59	230-233	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
60	234-237	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
61	238-241	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
62	242-245	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
63	246-249	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
64	250-253	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
65	254-257	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
66	258-261	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
67	262-265	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
68	266-269	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
69	270-273	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
70	274-277	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
71	278-281	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
72	282-285	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
73	286-289	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
74	290-293	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
75	294-297	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
76	298-301	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
77	302-305	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
78	306-309	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
79	310-313	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
80	314-317	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
81	318-321	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
82	322-325	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
83	326-329	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
84	330-333	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
85	334-337	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
86	338-341	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
87	342-345	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
88	346-349	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
89	350-353	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
90	354-357	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
91	358-361	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
92	362-365	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
93	366-369	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
94	370-373	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
95	374-377	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
96	378-381	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
97	382-385	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
98	386-389	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
99	390-393	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones
100	394-397	GOAT (M) H. Jones 5.1 5.1	H. Jones

BETTING: 5-4 Cypriates, 5-2 Decote, 7-2 Set The Festival, 9-5 J. J. Jones, 10-1 Miffed, 16-1

1985: Lydell 6.1 1.1 Henry 10.0 1.1 (H) Jones 5.1

1986: Lydell 6.1 1.1 Henry 10.0 1.1 (H) Jones 5.1

DECLARED, placed in with his Nif Flat race last term and runner-up behind Armbrast at Doncaster on September on his handling boy, is a sturdy proposition but can be given any last chance. Beaten a close length by Mr Edgar at Pontefract last month, he would probably have won just for trying to run out after a second time on the same day. His last race was making the 100 yards a fair four for the first time on Sunday. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. He is a good horse, but he is not a horse to back for the first time on the same day. 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71101	LOUISIERE CANTO (5500) (D) H Bailey 9 11 2	A Thomsen
71102	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Thomsen
71103	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71104	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71105	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71106	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71107	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71108	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71109	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71110	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71111	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71112	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71120	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71129	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71176	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71177	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71178	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71189	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71190	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71191	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71193	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71195	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
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71197	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71198	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9
71199	CHAMN HUNT (540) (D) Poynter 11 3 5 5	A Bailey 9
71200	WILLIE HARTLEY (540) (D) H Phillips 5 5 5	A Bailey 9

FINAL FIGURES FOR THE LEADING PLAYERS DURING THE FLAT TURF SEASON				
JOCKEYS	Wins	Rides	%	Profit to £1
Pat Eddery	188	88.3	21	-99.98
T. Scudamore	148	88.3	21	-99.98
K. Fallon	136	90.7	15	-218.31
J. Weaver	129	82.2	16	-30.32
L. Dettori	123	56.9	22	+10.82
K. Dwyer	113	86.7	13	-182.30
J. Reid	112	86.7	13	-182.30
R. Cochrane	86	62.7	14	-45.96
J. Fortune	83	72.7	11	-253.71
M. Hills	80	55.2	14	-45.57
S. Sanders	79	47.6	17	-53.05
R. Ryan	73	70.8	10	-189.25
J. Carroll	72	65.2	11	-105.83
D. O'Neill	70	65.2	11	-105.83

TRAINERS				
Money won	Wins	Rides	Profit to £1	Last 24 days
Sheed Bin Suroor	1,983,588	48	158	+70.99
H. Cecil	1,983,507	113	396	-17.83
M. Stoute	1,983,507	113	396	-17.83
J. Gosden	1,061,320	73	451	-75.89
M. Johnston	1,061,289	108	775	-144.04
J. Dwyer	972,484	88	594	-145.06
R. Hannon	874,406	107	1,054	-311.53
P. Cole	853,621	74	427	-64.57
G. Wragg	889,208	27	175	-22.51
W. Haggas	889,208	27	175	-22.51
S. Wootton	878,729	2/27		
D. Lodge	739,678	56	265	-16.28
L. Cumani	687,792	62	335	-62.80
J. Berry	656,212	99	712	-47.52

FINAL FIGURES FOR THE LEADING PLAYERS DURING THE FLAT TURF SEASON				
JOCKEYS	Wins	Rides	%	Profit to £1
Pat Eddery	188	88.3	21	-99.98
T. Scudamore	148	88.3	21	-99.98
K. Fallon	136	90.7	15	-218.31
J. Weaver	129	82.2	16	-30.32
L. Dettori	123	56.9	22	+10.82
K. Dwyer	113	86.7	13	-182.30
J. Reid	112	86.7	13	-182.30
R. Cochrane	86	62.7	14	-45.96
J. Fortune	83	72.7	11	-253.71
M. Hills	80	55.2	14	-45.57
S. Sanders	79	47.6	17	-53.05
R. Ryan	73	70.8	10	-189.25
J. Carroll	72	65.2	11	-105.83
D. O'Neill	70	65.2	11	-105.83

TRAINERS				
Money won	Wins	Rides	Profit to £1	Last 24 days
Sheed Bin Suroor	1,983,588	48	158	+70.99
H. Cecil	1,983,507	113	396	-17.83
M. Stoute	1,983,507	113	396	-17.83
J. Gosden	1,061,320	73	451	-75.89
M. Johnston	1,061,289	108	775	-144.04
J. Dwyer	972,484	88	594	-145.06
R. Hannon	874,406	107	1,054	-311.53
P. Cole	853,621	74	427	-64.57
G. Wragg	889,208	27	175	-22.51
W. Haggas	889,208	27	175	-22.51
S. Wootton	878,729	2/27		
D. Lodge	739,678	56	265	-16.28
L. Cumani	687,792	62	335	-62.80
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It is the height of folly – no, it is sheer madness – to go into an international without a recognised and reliable place kicker

Lord Beaverbrook used to say that, if you did not blow your own trumpet, no one else was going to blow it for you. Here is a modest toot rather than a full blast. I expected Phil de Glanville to be the new England captain and wrote as much in this column a couple of weeks ago. I also expected Will Carling to retain his place.

Where I was wrong was in thinking that Carling would be picked in what was then his new Harlequins position, of outside-half (he has subsequently reverted to inside centre, at any rate for the important club matches). This would have enabled him to exercise his newly acquired place-kicking skills on his country's behalf and, at the same time, to leave room for

Jeremy Guscott at outside-centre. I would claim to have been two-thirds right. For Carling may still do the kicking at goal, Jack Rowell, who loves nothing better than a good tease – one reason why I thought he would go for De Glanville rather than the better-fancied Lawrence Dallaglio – has left his intentions unclear. Most of my colleagues think the task will be undertaken by the new full-back, Tim Stimpson. Others speculate that the job will be done by Mike Catt. Certainly Catt is the most natural kicker of the three. I have seen him put over several good goals for Bath in the absence of their regular place kicker, Jonathan Callard, who until last season used to be England's regular as well. Now he has

been completely discarded. It may be that Rowell thinks that, at 30, he is too old to see England through to the next World Cup. But, if so, why is Carling (who is a month older) kept in the side? Callard is not the most exciting full-back I have ever seen. But he retains his speed. He judges his incursions into the line well. Above all, he is a very good place kicker. So too is Paul Grayson, who undertook the duties last season. So is Leicester's new outside-half, Rob Liley, not to mention Wags' left-footed full-back, Jon Upton. Any one of these is the superior of the three potential place kickers in the England side: Carling, Catt and Stimpson. It is the height of folly – no, it is



ALAN WATKINS

sheer madness – to go into an international without a recognised and reliable place kicker. For five years, Wales have managed to retain a vestige of international respectability, largely through the efforts of the unappreciated (he certainly thinks him-

self unappreciated) Neil Jenkins. Ireland would have prospered more if they had possessed the wit to play Michael O'Connor, then of London Irish, now of Harlequins, on the left wing. Nor have the large scores and the high number of tries that we have seen this season lessened the importance of the place kicker. If anything, he has become even more essential. Not only do tries have to be converted; moreover, the very changes in the laws which have brought about so many of them give rise to penalties. No one is now sure how or when the ball should be played after a tackle, what the tackle player should do, whether the other players should have to stay on their feet.

Murrayfield on Saturday provided an illustration of the continuing importance of the place kick. Many have talked about the might of the Australian forwards, even though they were below par. Few have mentioned the great contribution of the Australian full-back, Matthew Burke. By contrast, most of the place kicks from his opposite number, Rowen Shepherd, looked as if they had been struck by a grandmother who had been at the malt whistly. Another Scottish example of the inept place kick used to be provided by Peter Brown. The difference was that his somehow struggled over, like what Puntch used to call a late-night reveller managing to find his front door.

Rowell's other tease is to play two inside centres. I simply cannot follow his reasoning here. I do not know whether one of them will opt for the outside or both play left and right. What makes the decision all the odder is that Guscott has been in excellent form. Afterwards the Bath coach, Brian Ashton, asked somewhat theatrically if anyone could name a better centre than Guscott in England. Well, I can name two actually. One is Allan Bateman, who plays for Richmond but is a Welshman. The other is Gary Connolly, who plays for Harlequins and is qualified for England. Ficking Connolly would, I am afraid, be a tease too far even for Rowell.

Brundle's drive on wild side

Derick Ailsop watches a veteran of the Formula One circuit warm up for the forthcoming RAC Rally



Martin Brundle gets to grips with a whole new driving game at the Silverstone Rally Centre yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

When you have competed in 157 grands prix, won the world sports-car championship and Le Mans, you are entitled to believe you know pretty well all there is to know about driving. And yet there was Martin Brundle, sitting attentively behind the wheel as the instructor delivered his lesson.

But then the Network Q RAC Rally demands respect, and for all Brundle's experience on the track, he is acutely conscious he is about to enter an entirely different competitive arena, a labyrinth of tight, slippery, dark forest tracks.

The realisation struck him moments after putting down the phone and receiving the call that invited him to fulfil one of those ambitions that most just fantasise over. A summer run with Colin McRae had sharpened his appetite and here was the opportunity to drive a Group A Ford Escort Cosworth in the biggest event on the British rallying calendar.

"It was something I'd always wanted to do," the 37-year-old Brundle said. "As the Formula One season had ended early I had the time. We were planning

a holiday in Mauritius but my wife Liz knew how much this meant to me and we called off the holiday. Then it suddenly began to dawn on me what I'd let myself in for. Not just a three-day event, but a two or three-week commitment. And I'd got to learn how to drive a rally car!"

The learning began yesterday, at Silverstone Rally Centre, under the tutelage of that most respected sage, Roger Clark, twice winner of the RAC in the Seventies. Brundle was guided through the basic principles of the left-hand-drive car, let loose on the rally stage, coaxed again, then let loose again.

He will have a session at another driving centre in Yorkshire on Thursday, test in fabled Kielder on Friday and then set off on his race before embarking on the three-day rally from Chester on Saturday week. By that point, he hopes to have as much faith in his navigator, Roger Freeman, as in the knowledge imparted by Clark.

"I'm going to be relying so heavily on my co-driver," Brundle said. "He's given me a book of pace notes and it looks Chinese to me. As with most things,

the more you get into it, the more you discover there is more to it than you realised. What intimidates me is that I won't be able to do it instinctively. I'm going to be very mechanical."

"It's going to be very difficult to go flat right over the crest when I'm told to by my co-driver. It's not like a grand prix circuit, where I know every corner. But I've got to do it, haven't I? And we go straight into one of the toughest stages in the world. My biggest fear is going

off on the first stage and having people say, 'What do you expect of a Formula One driver?' I don't want to let down Formula One."

Brundle soon became acquainted with some of the essential differences between Formula One and rallying. "I normally have 14 men to change my wheels but I know I could have to do that for myself on a foggy, muddy track somewhere. You've even got to do up your own seatbelts here. It's a culture shock."

"But I have to say I've sensed no resentment from the regular rally people. In fact, I've had lots of offers of help from guys like Carlos Sainz and Juha Kankkunen. They are genuinely pleased to see me. Not that Juha is expecting me to breeze past him in the forests. Even if I did, I honestly believe he would help me."

Sainz and McRae are among the notable absentees this year, the RAC having taken its turn to be excluded from the world championship. The test, how-

ever, remains daunting enough for the new boy. "It's still the RAC and if I get to the end I'll be elated," he said. "A bit like Le Mans. Also like Le Mans, I'm sure there will be times when I'll be thinking, 'What am I doing here?' But if I can finish in the top 20, that would be fantastic."

Clark, who also instructed Jim Clark and Graham Hill, was suitably impressed with his latest pupil from Formula One. "He's got to remember there can be logs and rocks on these

tracks, but he's a natural driver. Jimmy was the most natural driver and Martin's not far behind."

This sabbatical has enabled Brundle to turn his mind from fretting about his future in Formula One. He fears he will lose his place at Jordan-Peugeot to Jean Alesi, who is thought to be facing the axe at Benetton-Renault. "I can't understand why they would want to pay Alesi a lot of money instead of me," Brundle said. "But I've got a few things up my sleeve."

Wigan bag brace of Kiwis

Rugby League

Wigan have completed the signing of the Auckland Warriors full-back David Murray. The Premiership Trophy holders beat a host of clubs, including Super League newcomers Salford Reds, to clinch 21-year-old Murray's signature on a three-year contract.

The player will link up with Wigan later this month and has already been pencilled in to make his debut in the Boxing Day fixture against St Helens at Central Park.

He will be joined in the Wigan line-up by fellow countryman Stuart Lester, the 21-year-old Kiwi second-rower, who turned down a new deal with the Warriors to join Wigan.

John Quayle yesterday became a casualty in the battle for control of the game between the Australian Rugby League and Rupert Murdoch's rival Super League. Quayle, who has resigned as chief executive of the ARL, will make a statement today but he has been quoted in Australian media as saying he regards himself as an impediment to any possible peace agreement between the rival bodies.

The ARL chairman, Ken Arthurson, said: "We have accepted it with the greatest reluctance but John felt it was in the best interest of the game."

The ARL last month suffered a reversal in its 18-month battle with Super League when Australia's Federal Court upheld a Super League appeal against previous orders banning the competition until the year 2000. The legal battle enters its final phase on Friday when the ARL will seek leave to appeal to the High Court.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football
7.30 unless stated
COCA-COLA CUP
THIRD-ROUND REPLAYS
Lancashire v Southampton (7.45)
Luton v Wimbledon (7.45)
NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Barnsley v Middlesbrough (7.45)
SECOND DIVISION
Sheff Wed v Bristol Rovers
THIRD DIVISION
St Albans v Exeter (7.45)
FOURTH DIVISION
St Albans v Exeter (7.45)

Rugby Union
1.15 unless stated
NATIONAL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
SECOND DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
THIRD DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
FOURTH DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)

Other sports
1.15 unless stated
NATIONAL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
SECOND DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
THIRD DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)
FOURTH DIVISION
Lancashire v Southampton (1.15)

Six binned after brawl

Six players from the Sheffield Steelers match against Basinstoke Bison could be finding plenty of time for pre-Christmas shopping, writes Steve Pinder.

With Steelers leading 3-2 just past the half-way stage, a brawl broke out, and after the officials had intervened, three players from either side – including the two netminders, James Hibbert and Richard Gallace – had been thrown out of the game for fighting.

After the penalties, the game produced some of the best play of the weekend, with Steelers winning 7-4.

Cardiff Devils remained top of the league thanks to some adept goal-tending. At Basinstoke, Frank Caprice fended off 33 shots without conceding a goal in the 4-0 win and, the following day, Stephen Lyle faced 27 shots without letting the puck past while his team-mates scored eight against Bracknell.

Sporting Digest

Athletics
Britain's marathon selectors have changed their policy for next year's World Championships. The London Marathon next April will now be used as a trial race and selection will be guaranteed to the first British man and woman not already chosen for the championships in Athens.

Basketball
SHEFFIELD LEAGUE: Sheffield 113 Chester 100.
Sheffield 113 Chester 100.
Sheffield 113 Chester 100.
Sheffield 113 Chester 100.
Sheffield 113 Chester 100.

Cricket
TODAY'S MATCH: India second day of first Test: South Africa 243 and 233; Karnataka 115.

Football
TRANSFERS: Gary Pender (Leeds) to Birmingham on loan (£250,000).
WORLD CUP SQUAD: Zinedine Zidane (France) is the only player to have played in all four World Cup finals.

SPORTING DIGEST

Ice hockey
NHL: Detroit 4 Tampa Bay 2, Philadelphia 3 Toronto 1, Chicago 2 Ottawa 0.

Rugby Union
Swansea's Stuart Evans is planning to appeal against his sending-off on Saturday. Former rugby league forward Evans and Ebbw Vale's Mark Jones were dismissed for fighting, and both face six-week suspensions. Evans' hopes of an international recall when Wales tackle Australia and South Africa next month would appear to be reduced by the dismissal.

Golf
Britain's Lee Westwood, who finished sixth in this season's European rankings, moved to a career-best world placing of 64 after his win in the Sunbelt Visa Dailymail Masters in Japan.

Baseball
MLB: New York Yankees 10 Boston Red Sox 6, St Louis Cardinals 7 Pittsburgh Pirates 4, San Francisco Giants 5 Los Angeles Dodgers 3.

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warning:

This Diverse 1000 digital cordless phone is so clear that if you say you're calling from work when you're actually in the garden, it would be wise to ask the blackbirds to cut the tweeting.

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BT It's good to talk



Brundle's L-plates
Derick Allsop on an old dog
learning new tricks, page 27

sport

Brunton or bust
Phil Shaw visits FA Cup
minnows Shepshed, page 26



Zola ready for his English translation

Shadowy figures scurried through the chilly evening air, their ears deafened by the thud of the jackhammers, their eyes blinded by the glare of the floodlights. It was an Italian scene at Stamford Bridge all right, one straight out of Dante's *Inferno* with the beating turned down.

The building work on the former Shed End seemed far removed from Gianfranco Zola's official unveiling in the plush Drake's club, but the activities reflected the same aim – the reawakening of Chelsea.

The continued development of the Shed, like Zola's arrival,

underlined that Matthew Harding's untimely death has not, so far, destroyed his Chelsea dreams. Indeed, the club seem to have become even bigger news. Zola was yesterday welcomed by another Italian scene: almost a hundred media men, including more than a dozen television crews. He responded by ignoring the interpreter and attempting to conduct interviews in fractured English – he has been learning for more than six months.

That suggests he has long been thinking of coming here but, when asked his intentions during *Euro 96*, he said: "Maybe

Glenn Moore hears Chelsea's latest Italian import look forward to his new career at Stamford Bridge

I will, but not until my contract expires in two years' time." At that time Parma were not prepared to let him go. Chelsea had enquired in the spring – and were quoted a fee of £10m. Yesterday Parma agreed to accept £4.5m. The 30-year-old Italian international thus signed until June 2000, joining Roberto di Matteo and Gianluca Vialli in Chelsea's Italian collection.

The reduction is due to changed circumstances at Parma. They are out of the Uefa Cup

and Zola is out of favour with Carlo Ancelotti, their coach. Zola had been moved from the front line to wide midfield and he was not happy about it.

"I have come to Chelsea because they believe in me," Zola said yesterday. "I have had a lot of problems at Parma this year. I want to play where I can do the most for the team."

This presumably means in a forward role. Rudi Gutierrez insisted neither Vialli nor Mark Hughes – "he has been playing

magnificently" – would make way but he said: "Zola needs to play on his instincts. He needs to do a job for the team but, when he has the ball, he has the freedom to create how he likes."

"His qualities are obvious. He has technical ability, he has vision, he can decide a game. He can give us a little bit extra."

Zola consulted Vialli, Di Matteo and Middlesbrough's Fabrizio Ravanelli before signing. "They told me English football is good," he said. "They said I can live well

and play well here. I like the atmosphere at English games and want to be a part of them."

Gullit said Zola would only make his debut at Blackburn on Saturday if he feels he has settled into his new environment. Otherwise his debut will be in a fortnight, at home to Newcastle. They could include a familiar face, Faustino Asprilla, who played with Zola at Parma.

His capacity to forge a dangerous partnership with Asprilla – they scored 29 *Serie A* goals between them in their first season – says a lot for his adaptability. So does the diminutive Sardinian's ability to step with-

out awe into the shoes of Diego Maradona for Napoli and Roberto Baggio for Italy.

"It was a golden opportunity," Gullit said. "You would pay more for an English player – everything is out of proportion here." Including, one imagines, Zola's wages – he is reported to be receiving £25,000 a week. As he spoke, a picture of Ted Drake's 1955 champions – Chelsea's only title-winners – stared down from the wall. Those players had also played in blue and kicked a ball but, in many ways, they had as much in common with Emile Zola as Gianfranco.



Zola: Problems at Parma

Eriksson in frame for Blackburn job

Football
ALAN NIXON

Blackburn Rovers' new manager could be Sven-Goran Eriksson, the highly rated Swede now in charge of Sampdoria.

Eriksson is in the last year of his contract in Italy and would like to take a top job in England after five seasons in *Serie A*. The English-speaking Eriksson has put out feelers via an agent to the Rovers' chairman, Robert Coar, who is thinking over the possibility of a confidential successor to Ray Harford.

Terry Venables, who turned down Blackburn, could be poised to take over as a coach of the Australian national side. The 53-year-old Venables, who became director of football at Portsmouth after leaving the England job at the end of *Euro 96*, is reported to be "very interested" in the offer.

According to the *Melbourne Herald Sun*, Venables has already been approached by the gov-

erning body, Soccer Australia, to take over from Eddie Thomson, who quit three weeks ago.

It is understood that Soccer Australia is looking for two coaches, one based at home and one overseas to monitor some of the 150 Australians now playing around the world.

A spokesman for Soccer Australia declined to confirm or deny that Venables was due to have an interview this week. "For obvious reasons we have to retain confidentiality on this but I can confirm we are speaking to a number of overseas coaches – as well as ones at home," he said. "We believe we are offering one of the great jobs in world soccer. Whoever takes over as Australia's coach has a superb chance of taking the team to the World Cup in 1998."

Leeds United have made a £3.3m bid to sign the Spanish defender Miguel Angel Nadal from under Manchester United's nose. George Graham has tabled a bigger offer to the Nou Camp club for the 30-year-old

centre-half who cannot command a regular place at Barcelona. United will only pay £2.5m for Nadal, who is now ineligible for the Champions' League. However, the player will move to Leeds only if he is sure the Old Trafford chance has gone completely.

The agent, Paul Stretford, has defended Gus Collymore as Liverpool announced that manager Roy Evans will be investigating the latest allegations surrounding his £8.5m striker.

Collymore was alleged to have shouted an obscenity aimed at the press during a reserve game against Sheffield Wednesday at the weekend. The comment was said to have been heard by children sitting nearby. Collymore, who scored twice in a 4-0 win, was playing his first game after his £20,000 fine for going on "strike" last week.

Stretford, Collymore's agent, said: "I've spoken to [chief executive] Peter Robinson at Liverpool and he has not received one complaint. I think it's an absolute disgrace. What worries me is that some reporters were not there to report on the match."

Cardiff City have appointed the former England defender Russell Osman as their new manager. The 37-year-old former Bristol City player-manager succeeds Phil Neal, who left the Third Division club to assist Steve Coppell at Manchester City last month, and has now been appointed caretaker manager at Maine Road after Coppell quit last week.

Bobby Robson's Barcelona are to entertain Celtic in a friendly on Tuesday 26 November. It is expected to attract a 50,000 full house, with the 20-year-old Brazilian Ronaldo, who has set Spanish football alight since Robson bought him from PSV Eindhoven in July for £13.5m, the big draw.

City £26m in debt

Manchester City have revealed that they are a staggering £26m in debt. The Maine Road club lost £3,168,073 last season, when they were relegated from the Premiership. Their debts rose from £19m to £26m, set against assets of £31m. The previous year they had made a profit of £203,759.

The City chairman, Francis Lee, remained positive. "Every club in the country, with the exception of two or three, report losses," he said. "What the balance sheet never takes on board is the value of players." City, who have already parted company with two managers this season, have been the subject of

takeover speculation in recent months.

Across town at Old Trafford, Manchester United have given their chairman and chief executive, Martin Edwards, a 39 percent pay rise. His annual salary, including performance-related bonuses, rises to £212,000.

The Italian *Serie A* club, Udinese, say they have rejected a bid of about £13m from Manchester United for their German international striker, Oliver Bierhoff, with whom Blackburn have also been linked.

Ryan Giggs will make his United comeback on Saturday against Arsenal after recovering from a persistent calf injury.



Kent's Dean Headley on the rampage during his match-winning performance for England A against South Australia in Adelaide yesterday. Photograph: Shaun Botterill/Allsport

Headley fires amazing win

Cricket

MYLES HODGSON
reports from Adelaide
England A 294 and 151
South Australia 276 and 157
England A win by 12 runs

England A shrugged off an umpiring controversy to celebrate an amazing 12-run victory over South Australia at the Adelaide Oval yesterday.

Needing just 164 more runs to win having resumed on six without loss, South Australia were reduced to 10 batsmen because Darren Lehmann was called up to the Northern Territory Invitational XI to face the West Indies in Alice Springs today. But they were still overwhelming favourites to complete England A's first defeat in a first-class match since losing to Natal in January, 1994.

But Dean Headley grabbed 5 for 38 to finish with a career best 11 for 98 in the match. South Australia capitulated at 157 in just 63.2 overs in a wild celebration at the Test venue.

Yet both the South Australian captain, Steve Siddons, and Joe Spence were involved in angry confrontations with the umpires over the decision to dismiss Headley. Spence, who will be named as their report on the match, although no further action is expected.

Headley began the collapse by having Greg Blewett caught behind in the third over of the day before Siddons was adjudged low to a full-length delivery from the Kent fast bowler, a decision he clearly disputed by standing his ground for several seconds and glaring at the umpire Ashley Hunter.

Jamie Brayshaw was run out on the next delivery by Michael Vaughan attempting a sharp single, and the opener Ben Johnson was caught at second slip by Adam Hobbie. In Headley's next over, Scuderi, standing at the non-striker's end, appeared to dispute the legality of the catch.

Hobbie, the England A captain, insisted: "When you think you've caught a ball, you ask the umpire to make a decision and they give it out and whether that's right or wrong you can't complain."

Scuderi, who finished with an unbeaten 55, then defied England for 27 overs in a 70-run partnership with Bradley Young to steer his side towards some sort of stability at 59 for 5.

Ashley Giles ended Young's innings while Headley dismissed Jason Gillespie and Peter Michmore in successive balls. Although Scuderi prevented the hat-trick after the tea interval, Giles wrapped up victory by bowling Harry around his legs.

England A won both first day of four Tests and a first innings 256 (M A Hobbie 73, W K Hogg 65, C White 61; M A Hobbie 4-61).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – First innings 276 (J Scuderi 102; D W Headley 6-60).

ENGLAND A – Second innings 151 (P E Malyre 4-43).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Second innings (Over 1: 6 for 0).

G S Blewett c Hogg b Headley 25

B A Johnson c Hobbie b Headley 28

J D Scuderi lbw b Headley 55

J A Brayshaw run out 1

J T Meston c Hogg b Giles 1

B E Young c White b Giles 1

N Gillespie b Headley 1

M A Hobbie b Giles 1

D S Lehmann absent

Bones (33, 62, 64)

Total (69.2 overs)

Falls 1-6, 2-38, 3-38, 4-41, 5-48, 6-128

7-150, 8-150, 9-157

Scoring: Headley 20-3-38-5; Hogg 9-0-30-

0; Edmon 6-0-18-0; Giles 14-5-38-5; Hogg 8-3-12-0; Hobbie 4-1-12-0; Vaughan 2-0-14-0.

Umpires: A J Hunter and R G Harvey.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3141, Tuesday 12 November By Aled
Monday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9							10
11							12
13	14			15			16
18							19
21							24
25							26
27							28

ACROSS

- He'd bothered to dig into decay recently acquired (3-3)
- Rash about tax, keeping a thousand pounds (8)
- It helps one to breathe right sort of praise to king (10)
- Part of Scotland associated with money they say (4)
- Bills resulting when clock's installed in ship (8)
- Silent about one's name for a short time (6)
- Preliminary race could mean end of horse being in Derby? (4)
- Wild enthusiast visiting Channel Islands gets nasty (8)
- Right-thinking Dorothy shortly trained domesticated animal (8)
- Type of window requiring square wood (4)
- Foolish person takes an hour to find a shellfish (6)
- One in charge solved each problem (8)
- Record island is situated in unvarying current (4)
- Pub gets acclaim for changes? (10)
- Magistrate arrests priest getting one let off (8)
- Song by leading singer where cars have pulled in (3-3)

DOWN

- Runner in position to get leave of absence (5)
- Game beer producer takes on another drink (9)
- Country's well-worn path overturned by opener (6)
- How Mark relates to other purchasers? (5-2-8)
- Church has right money spent for service? (8)
- Leonard takes little time to get citrus fruit (5)
- They cut true cases out (9)
- Land line's safety device (5-4)
- Straight away becomes terribly saintly taking conservation body to heart (9)
- In our time work I vet is arranged as a surrogate (8)
- Mass Ravel arranged is a wonder (6)
- Become responsible for one new dog (3)
- Old English found in Orkney island is rubbish (5)

King seeking an early rematch

Boxing

Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson could be back in the ring in March or June, if you believe the noises coming from the promoter Don King.

It is understood that a pre-fight agreement was reached stipulating the date of a rematch, but nothing is certain as the various camps, including Britain's Lennox Lewis, manoeuvre for a crack at the new World Boxing Association champion.

King has a promotional agreement for Holyfield's next fight, but he is a long way from calling the shots in the champion's career if he fights on.

"When Don King has on paper means nothing. We will always be Evander's promoters. He will listen to us," Holyfield's promoter, Dino Duva, said.

Lewis fights Oliver McCall for the vacant World Boxing Council title in January, but any unification fight with Holyfield is fraught with complications.

Michael Moore and Lewis' fellow-Briton Henry Akinwande retained their International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Organisation titles on the Tyson-Holyfield undercard in Las Vegas.

All the world title holders now want the most lucrative fight in boxing and Lewis' manager, Frank Maloney, said:

"When Lennox regains the WBC title I do believe Holyfield will want to fight him. He has gone on record as saying that Lennox is the heavyweight everyone is running away from. I think Holyfield will want to prove a point."

At the moment, Holyfield wants to enjoy his victory and consider his future later. After joining Muhammad Ali as the only man to win a world heavyweight title three times, he has nothing more to prove.

On Friday, however, Holyfield faces Tyson again to do a live commentary on the fight. Maybe then King can get to work on a live repeat of one of the greatest upsets in boxing history.

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